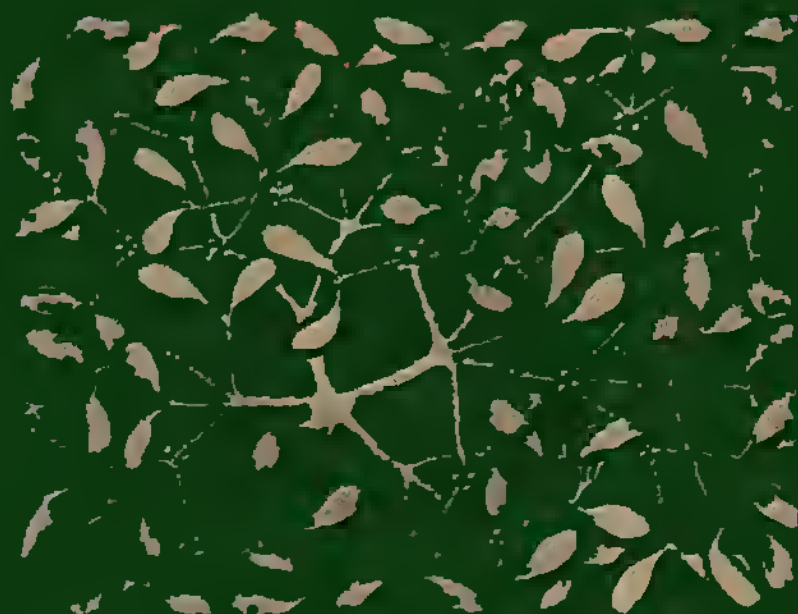


THE GOLDEN BOUGH
A STUDY IN MAGIC AND RELIGION



IN
MAGIC
AND
RELIGION



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THE GOLDEN BOUGH





THE
GOLDEN BOUGH

A STUDY
IN MAGIC AND RELIGION

BY

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CHAPTER III—(*continued*)

§ 13. *Transference of Evil*

THE custom of killing the god has now been proved to have been practised by peoples in the hunting, pastoral, and agricultural stages of society, and the various reasons for observing it have been explained. One aspect of the custom still remains to be noticed. The accumulated misfortunes and sins of the whole people are sometimes laid upon the dying god, who is supposed to bear them away for ever, leaving the people innocent and happy. The notion that we can transfer our guilt and pains and griefs to some other being who will bear them in our stead is familiar to the savage mind. It arises from a very obvious confusion between the physical and the mental. Because it is possible to transfer a load of wood, stones, or what not, from our own back to the back of another, the savage fancies that it is equally possible to transfer the burden of his pains and sins and sorrows to another, who will suffer them in his stead. Upon this idea he acts, and the result is an endless number of often very unamiable devices for putting off upon some one else the trouble which a man shrinks from bearing himself. Such devices are amongst the most familiar facts in folk-lore ; but for the benefit of readers who are not professed students of folk-lore, some illustrations may be given.

It is not necessary that the evil should be transferred from the culprit or sufferer to a person ; it may equally well be transferred to an animal or a thing, though in the last case the thing is often only a vehicle to

convey the trouble to the first person who touches it. In some of the East Indian islands they think that epilepsy can be cured by striking the patient on the face with the leaves of certain trees and then throwing them away. The disease is believed to have passed into the leaves, and to have been thrown away with them.¹ When an Atkhan of the Aleutian Islands had committed a grave sin and desired to unburden himself of his guilt, he proceeded as follows. Having chosen a time when the sun was clear and unclouded, he picked up certain weeds and carried them about his person. Then he laid them down, and calling the sun to witness, cast his sins upon them, after which, having eased his heart of all that weighed upon it, he threw the weeds into the fire, and fancied that thus he cleansed himself of his guilt.² In Vedic times a younger brother who married before his elder brother was thought to have sinned in so doing, but there was a ceremony by which he could purge himself of his sin. Fetters of reed-grass were laid on him in token of his guilt, and when they had been washed and sprinkled they were flung into a foaming torrent, which swept them away, while the evil was bidden to vanish with the foam of the stream.³ An Arab cure for melancholy or madness caused by love is to put a dish of water on the sufferer's head, drop melted lead into it, and then bury the lead in an open field; thus the mischief that was in the man goes away.⁴ Amongst the Miotse of China, when the eldest son of the house attains the age of seven years, a ceremony called "driving away the devil" takes place. The father makes a kite of straw and lets it fly away in the desert, bearing away all evil with it.⁵ Dyak priestesses expel ill-luck from a house by hewing and slashing the air in every corner of it with wooden swords, which they afterwards wash in the river, to let the ill-luck float away down stream. Sometimes they sweep misfortune out of the house with

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluit. en kroes-harige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, pp. 266 sq., 305, 357 sq.; cp. *id.*, pp. 141, 340.

² Petroff, *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, p. 158.

³ H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 322.

⁴ This I learned from my friend W. Robertson Smith, who mentioned as his authority David of Antioch, *Tazyin*, in the story "Orwa."

⁵ R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*, p. 29 sq.

brooms made of the leaves of certain plants and sprinkled with rice-water and blood. Having swept it clean out of every room and into a toy-house made of bamboo, they set the little house with its load of bad luck adrift on the river. The current carries it away out to sea, where it shifts its baleful cargo to a certain kettle-shaped ship, which floats in mid-ocean and receives in its capacious hold all the ills that flesh is heir to. Well would it be with mankind if the evils remained for ever tossing far away on the billows; but, alas, they are dispersed from the ship to the four winds, and settle again, and yet again, on the weary Dyak world. On Dyak rivers you may see many of the miniature houses, laden with manifold misfortunes, bobbing up and down on the current, or sticking fast in the thickets that line the banks.¹ To cure toothache some of the Australian blacks apply a heated spear-thrower to the cheek. The spear-thrower is then cast away, and the toothache goes with it in the shape of a black stone called *karriitch*. Stones of this kind are found in old mounds and sandhills. They are carefully collected and thrown in the direction of enemies in order to give them toothache.² In Mirzapur a mode of transferring disease is to fill a pot with flowers and rice and bury it in a pathway covered up with a flat stone. Whoever touches this is supposed to contract the disease. The practice is called *chalauwa*, or "passing on" the malady. This sort of thing goes on daily in Upper India. Often while walking of a morning in the bazaar you will see a little pile of earth adorned with flowers in the middle of the road. Such a pile usually contains some scabs or scales from the body of a small-pox patient, which are placed there in the hope that some one may touch them, and by catching the disease may relieve the sufferer.³

In the western district of the island of Timor, when men or women are making long and tiring journeys, they fan themselves with leafy branches, which they afterwards throw

¹ C. Hupe, "Korte Verhandeling over de Godsdienst, Zeden enz. der Dajakkers," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands Indië*, 1846, dl. iii. p. 149 sq.; F. Grabowsky, "Die Theogonie der Dajaken auf Borneo," *Internationales Archiv*

für Ethnographie, v. (1892), p. 131.

² J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 59.

³ W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 106.

away on particular spots where their forefathers did the same before them. The fatigue which they felt is thus supposed to have passed into the leaves and to be left behind. Others use stones instead of leaves.¹ Similarly in the Babar Archipelago tired people will strike themselves with stones, believing that they thus transfer to the stones the weariness which they felt in their own bodies. They then throw away the stones in places which are specially set apart for the purpose.² A like belief and practice in many distant parts of the world have given rise to those cairns or heaps of sticks and leaves which travellers often observe beside the path, and to which every passing native adds his contribution in the shape of a stone, or stick, or leaf. Thus in the Solomon and Banks Islands the natives are wont to throw sticks, stones, or leaves upon a heap at a place of steep descent, or where a difficult path begins, saying, "There goes my fatigue." The act is not a religious rite, for the thing thrown on the heap is not an offering to spiritual powers, and the words which accompany the act are not a prayer. It is nothing but a magical ceremony for getting rid of fatigue, which the simple savage fancies he can embody in a stick, leaf, or stone, and so cast it from him.³ An early Spanish missionary to Nicaragua, observing that along the paths there were heaps of stones on which the Indians as they passed threw grass, asked them why they did so. "Because we think," was the answer, "that thereby we are kept from weariness and hunger, or at least that we suffer less from them."⁴ In Guatemala also piles of stones may be seen at the partings of ways and on the tops of cliffs and mountains. Every passing Indian used to gather a handful of grass, rub his legs with it, spit on it, and deposit it with a small stone on the pile, firmly persuaded that by so doing he would restore their flagging vigour to his weary limbs.⁵ Here

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, "Die Landschaft Dawan oder West-Timor," *Deutsche Geographische Blätter*, x. 231.

² *Id.*, *De sluik en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 340.

³ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 186.

⁴ Oviedo, *Histoire du Nicaragua* (Paris, 1840), p. 42 sq. (Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages, Relations et Mémoires originaux*, etc.).

⁵ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale*, ii. 564; compare

the rubbing of the limbs with the grass, like the Babar custom of striking the body with a stone, was doubtless a mode of extracting the fatigue from them as a preliminary to throwing it away. Similarly on the plateau between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyassa the native carriers, before they ascend a steep hill with their loads, will pick up a stone, spit on it, rub the calves of their legs with it, and then deposit it on one of those small piles of stones which are commonly to be found at such spots in this part of Africa. A recent English traveller, who noticed the custom, was informed that the carriers practise it "to make their legs light,"¹ in other words, to extract the fatigue from them. On the banks of the Kei river in Southern Africa, about seventy years ago, another English traveller noticed some heaps of stones. On inquiring what they meant, he was told by his guides that when a Caffre felt weary he had but to add a stone to the heap to regain fresh vigour.² From other accounts of the Caffre custom we learn that these cairns are generally on the sides or tops of mountains, and that before a native deposits his stone on the pile he spits on it.³ The practice of spitting on the stone which the weary wayfarer lays on the pile is probably a mode of transferring his fatigue the more effectually to the material vehicle which is to rid him of it. We have seen that the practice prevails among the Indians of Guatemala and the natives of the Tanganyika plateau, and it appears to be observed also in similar circumstances in Corca, where the cairns are to be

iii. 486. Indians of Guatemala, when they cross a pass for the first time, still commonly add a stone to the cairn which marks the spot. See C. Sapper, "Die Gebräuche und religiösen Anschauungen der Kekchi-Indianer," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, viii. (1895), p. 197.

¹ F. F. R. Boileau, "The Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau," *The Geographical Journal*, xlii. (1899), p. 589. In the same region Mr. L. Decle observed many trees or rocks on which were placed little heaps of stones or bits of wood, to which in passing each of his men added a fresh stone or bit of wood or a tuft of grass. "This," says Mr. Decle,

"is a tribute to the spirits, the general precaution to ensure a safe return" (*Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 289). A similar practice prevails among the Wanyamwezi (*ibid.* p. 345). Compare Grant, *A Walk across Africa*, p. 133 sq.

² Cowper Rose, *Four Years in Southern Africa* (London, 1829), p. 147.

³ S. Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria*, p. 211 sq.; Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, i. 66; D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus and Amatongas* (Edinburgh, 1875), p. 146 sq. Compare Lichtenstein, *Reisen im südlichen Africa*, i. 411.

found especially on the tops of passes.¹ From the primitive point of view nothing can be more natural than that the cairns or the heaps of sticks and leaves to which the tired traveller adds his contribution should stand at the top of passes and, in general, on the highest points of the road. The wayfarer who has toiled, with aching limbs and throbbing temples, up a long and steep ascent, is aware of a sudden alleviation as soon as he has reached the summit; he feels as if a weight had been lifted from him, and to the savage, with his concrete mode of thought, it seems natural and easy to cast the weight from him in the shape of a stone or stick, or a bunch of leaves or of grass. Hence it is that the piles which represent the accumulated weariness of many foot-sore and heavy-laden travellers are to be seen wherever the road runs highest in the lofty regions of Bolivia, Tibet, Bhootan, and Burma,² in the passes of the Andes and the Himalayas, as well as in Corea, Caffraria, Guatemala, and Melanesia.

But it is not mere bodily fatigue which the savage fancies he can rid himself of in this easy fashion. Unable clearly to distinguish the immaterial from the material, the abstract from the concrete, he is assailed by vague terrors, he feels himself exposed to some ill-defined danger on the scene of any great crime or great misfortune. The place to him seems haunted ground. The thronging memories that crowd upon his mind, if they are not mistaken by him for goblins and phantoms, oppress his fancy with a leaden weight. His impulse is to flee from the dreadful spot,

¹ W. Gowland, "Dolmen and other Antiquities of Corea," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895), p. 328 sq.; Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, i. 147, ii. 223. Both writers speak as if the practice were to spit on the cairn rather than on the particular stone which the traveller adds to it; indeed, Mrs. Bishop omits to notice the custom of adding to the cairns. Mr. Gowland says that almost every traveller carries up at least one stone from the valley and lays it on the pile.

² D. Forbes, "On the Aymara Indians of Peru and Bolivia," *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*, ii. (1870), p. 237 sq.; G. C. Masters,

"Notes on Bolivia," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, xlvii. (1877), p. 211; T. T. Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce* (London, 1871), p. 275; J. A. H. Louis, *The Gates of Thibet, a Bird's Eye View of Independent Sikhim, British Bhootan, and the Doorgs* (Calcutta, 1894), p. 111 sq.; Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 483. So among the Mrus of Aracan, every man who crosses a hill, on reaching the crest, plucks a fresh young shoot of grass and lays it on a pile of the withered deposits of former travellers (T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, p. 232 sq.).

to shake off the burden that seems to cling to him like a nightmare. This, in his simple sensuous way, he thinks he can do by casting something at the horrid place and hurrying by. For will not the contagion of misfortune, the horror that clutched at his heart-strings, be diverted from himself into the thing? will it not gather up in itself all the evil influences that threatened him, and so leave him to pursue his journey in safety and peace? Some such train of thought, if these gropings and fumbings of a mind in darkness deserve the name of thought, seems to explain the custom, observed by wayfarers in many lands, of throwing sticks or stones on places where something horrible has happened or evil deeds have been done. When Lieutenant Younghusband was travelling across the great desert of Gobi his caravan descended, towards dusk on a June evening, into a long depression between the hills, which was notorious as a haunt of robbers. His guide, with a terror-stricken face, told how not long before nine men out of a single caravan had been murdered, and the rest left in a pitiable state to continue their journey on foot across the awful desert. A horseman, too, had just been seen riding towards the hills. "We had accordingly to keep a sharp look-out, and when we reached the foot of the hills, halted, and, taking the loads off the camels, wrapped ourselves up in our sheepskins and watched through the long hours of the night. Day broke at last, and then we silently advanced and entered the hills. Very weird and fantastic in their rugged outline were they, and here and there a cairn of stones marked where some caravan had been attacked, and as we passed these each man threw one more stone on the heap."¹ In the Norwegian district of Telemarken a cairn is piled up wherever anything fearful has happened, and every passer-by must throw another stone on it, or some evil will befall him.² In Sweden and the Esthonian island of Oesel the same custom is practised on scenes of clandestine or illicit love, with the strange addition in Oesel that when a man has lost his cattle he will go to such a spot, and, while he flings a stick or stone on it,

¹ F. E. Younghusband, "A Journey across Central Asia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, x. (1888), p. 494.

² F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, p. 274 sq.

will say, "I bring thee wood. Let me soon find my lost cattle."¹ Far from these northern lands, the Dyaks of Batang Lupar keep up an observance of the same sort in the forests of Borneo. Beside their paths may be seen heaps of sticks or stones which are called "lying heaps." Each heap is in memory of some man who told a stupendous lie or disgracefully failed in carrying out an engagement, and everybody who passes adds a stick or stone to the pile, saying as he does so, "For So-and-so's lying heap."²

But, as might perhaps have been anticipated, it is on scenes of murder and sudden death that this rude method of averting or diverting evil is most commonly practised. The custom that every passer-by must cast a stone or stick on the spot where some one has come to a violent end, whether by murder or otherwise, has been observed in practically the same form in such many and diverse parts of the world as Ireland, France, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Bohemia, Lesbos, Morocco, Armenia, Arabia, India, North America, Venezuela, Bolivia, Celebes, and New Zealand.³ Sometimes the scene of the murder or death may also be the grave of the victim, but it need not always be so, and in Europe, where the dead are buried in consecrated ground, the two places would seldom coincide. However, the custom of throwing stones or sticks on a grave

¹ F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, p. 274; Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. (1872), p. 73.

² Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*,² i. 88.

³ A. C. Haddon, "A Batch of Irish Folk-lore," *Folk-lore*, iv. (1893), pp. 357, 360; Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France*, ii. 75, 77; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 309; Hylten-Cavallius, quoted by Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, p. 274; K. Haupt, *Sagenbuch der Lausitz*, ii. 65; K. Müllenhoff, *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder der Herzogthümer Schleswig, Holstein und Lauenburg*, p. 125; A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 113; Kuhn und Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 85; A. Treichel, "Reisig-häufung und Steinhäufung an Mordstellen," *Am Ur-Quelle*, vi. (1896), p.

220; Georgeakis et Pineau, *Folk-lore de Lesbos*, p. 323; Leared, *Morocco and the Moors*, p. 105 sq.; Haxthausen, *Transkaukasien*, i. 222; W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 167; J. Bricknell, *The Natural History of North Carolina* (Dublin, 1737), p. 380; J. Adair, *History of the American Indians*, p. 184; K. Martin, *Bericht über eine Reise nach Niederländisch West-Indien*, Erster Theil (Leyden, 1887), p. 166; G. C. Musters, "Notes on Bolivia," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, xlvii. (1877), p. 211; B. F. Maithes, *Einige Eigenthümlichkeiten in den Festeu und Gewohnheiten der Makassaren und Büginesen*, p. 25 (separate reprint from *Travaux de la 6e Session du Congrès International des Orientalistes à Leide*, vol. ii.); R. A. Cruise, *Journal of a Ten Months' Residence in New Zealand*, p. 186.

has undoubtedly been observed by passers-by in many parts of the world, and that, too, even when the graves are not those of persons who have come to a violent end. Thus we are told that the people of Unalashka, one of the Aleutian Islands, bury their dead on the summits of hills and raise a little hillock over the grave. "In a walk into the country one of the natives who attended me pointed out several of these receptacles of the dead. There was one of them by the side of the road leading from the harbour to the village over which was raised a heap of stones. It was observed that every one who passed it added one to it."¹ The Roumanians of Transylvania think that a dying man should have a burning candle in his hand, and that any one who dies without a light has no right to the ordinary funeral ceremonies. The body of such an unfortunate is not laid in holy ground, but is buried wherever it may be found. His grave is marked only by a heap of dry branches, to which each passer-by is expected to add a handful of twigs or a thorny bough.² The Hottentot god or hero Heitsi-cibib, as the reader is already aware, died several times and came to life again. When the Hottentots pass one of his numerous graves they throw a stone, a bush, or a fresh branch on it for good luck.³ Near the former mission-station of Blyde-uitzigt in Cape Colony there was a spot called Devil's Neck where, in the opinion of the Bushmen, the devil was interred. To hinder his resurrection stones were piled in heaps about the place. When a Bushman, travelling in the company of a missionary, came in sight of the spot he seized a stone and hurled it at the grave, remarking that if he did not do so his neck would be twisted round so that he would have to look backwards for the term of his natural life.⁴ Stones are cast by passers-by on the graves of murderers in some parts of Senegambia.⁵ In Syria deceased robbers are not buried like

¹ Cook, *Voyages* (London, 1809), vi. 479.

² E. Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, i. 311, 318.

³ H. Lichtenstein, *Reisen im Südlichen Afrika*, i. 349 sq.; Sir James E. Alexander, *Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa*, i. 166; C. J. Anderson, *Lake Ngami*, p. 327; W.

H. J. Bleek, *Reynard the Fox in South Africa*, p. 76; Th. Hahn, *Tsunibgoam, the Supreme Being of the Khoi-Khoi*, p. 56.

⁴ Th. Hahn, "Die Buschmänner," *Globus*, xviii. 141.

⁵ Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, ii. 195, referring to Raffanel,

honest folk, but left to rot where they lie; and a pile of stones is raised over the mouldering corpse. Every one who passes such a pile must fling a stone at it, on pain of incurring God's malison.¹ Between sixty and seventy years ago an Englishman was travelling from Sidon to Tyre with a couple of Musalmans. When he drew near Tyre his companions picked up some small stones, armed him in the same fashion, and requested him to be so kind as to follow their example. Soon afterwards they came in sight of a conical heap of pebbles and stones standing in the road, at which the two Musalmans hurled stones and curses with great vehemence and remarkable volubility. When they had discharged this pious duty to their satisfaction, they explained that the missiles and maledictions were directed at a celebrated robber and murderer, who had been knocked on the head and buried there some half a century before.²

In these latter cases it may perhaps be thought that the sticks and stones serve no other purpose than to keep off the angry and dangerous ghost who might be supposed to haunt either the place of death or the grave. Yet when we remember that precisely the same customs are practised in circumstances which exclude the supposition of a ghost—for example, on spots defiled by moral turpitude without any shedding of blood, or again by weary travellers whose only thought is of rest—we shall probably incline to reject this obvious explanation and to seek one which will apply to all the cases we have been considering. That explanation appears to be supplied by the primitive view of death and the dead as the sources of a dangerous pollution which infects all who come near them. To rid himself of that pollution, which, as usual, he conceives in a concrete form, the savage seeks to gather it up in a material vehicle and leave it behind him on the hazardous spot, while, having thus cast care away, he hastens forward with a lighter heart. This explanation falls in exactly with the tradition as to the

Nouveau Voyage dans le pays des nègres (Paris, 1856), i. 93 sq.

¹ Eijüb Abēla, "Beiträge zur Kenntnis abergläubischer Gebräuche in Syrien," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen*

Palaestina. Vereins, vii. (1884), p. 102.

² Note by G. P. Padger, on *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, translated by J. W. Jones (Hakluyt Society, 1863), p. 45.

origin of those cairns which were to be seen by wayside images of Hermes in ancient Greece, and to which every passer-by added a stone. It was said that when Hermes was tried by the gods for the murder of Argus all the gods flung stones at him as a means of freeing themselves from the pollution contracted by bloodshed; the stones thus thrown made a great heap, and the custom of rearing such heaps at wayside images of Hermes continued ever afterwards.¹ At all events this mode of interpreting the custom appears preferable to the one which has generally found favour with European travellers and writers. Imperfectly acquainted for the most part with the notions which underlie primitive magic, but very familiar with the religious conception of a deity who requires sacrifice of his worshippers, they are apt to interpret the missiles in question as cheap and easy offerings presented by pious but frugal worshippers to ghosts or spirits whose favour they desire to win.² Whether a likely mode of conciliating a ghost or spirit is to throw sticks and stones at him is a question about which opinions might perhaps differ. It is difficult to speak with confidence about the tastes of spiritual beings, but as a rule they bear a remarkable likeness to those of mere ordinary mortals, and it may be said without fear of contradiction that few of the latter would be gratified by being set up as a common target to be shied at with sticks and stones by everybody who passed within range. Yet it is quite possible that a ceremony, which at first was purely magical, may in time have a religious gloss or interpretation put on it even by those

¹ *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. Ἑρμαῖον, p. 375 sq.; Eustathius on Homer, *Odyssey*, xvi. 471. As to the heaps of stones see Cornutus, *De natura deorum*, 16; Balnrius, *Fabulae*, xlviii. 1 sq.; Suidas, s.v. Ἑρμαῖον; Schol. on Nicander, *Theor.* 150. The method of execution by stoning may perhaps have been resorted to in order to avoid the pollution which would be entailed by contact with the guilty and dying man.

² See, for example, O. Baijmann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle*, p. 214; G. M. Dawson, "Notes on the Shuswap People of British

Columbia," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, ix. (1891), section ii. p. 38; F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, pp. 267 sq., 273 sq., 276, 278 sq.; R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*, p. 48. Mr. E. S. Hartland explains the practice as an act of ceremonial union with the spirit of the cairn (*Legend of Perseus*, ii. 228). Some of these writers have made a special study of the practices in question. See F. Liebrecht, "Die geworfenen Steine," *Zur Volkskunde*, pp. 267-284; R. Andree, "Steinhaufen," *Ethnogr. Parallelen und Vergleiche*, p. 46-58.

who practise it ; and this seems in fact to have sometimes happened to the particular custom under consideration. Certainly some people accompany the throwing of the stone on the pile with the presentation of useful articles, which can hardly serve any other purpose than that of propitiating some local spirits. Thus travellers in Sikhim and Bhootan offer flour and wine, as well as stones, at the cairns ; and they also burn incense and recite incantations.¹ Indians of Guatemala offered, according to their means, a little cotton, salt, cacao, or chili.² They now burn copal and sometimes dance on the tops of the passes where the cairns are to be seen, but perhaps these devotions may be paid to the crosses which at the present day are generally set up in such situations.³ In Bolivia the Indian will squirt out the juice of his coca-quid, or throw the quid itself on the cairn, to which he adds a stone ; occasionally he goes so far as to stick feathers or a leathern sandal or two on the pile. In passing the cairns he will sometimes pull a hair or two out of his eyebrows or eyelashes and puff them away towards the sun.⁴ In Sweden a piece of money is sometimes thrown on a cairn instead of a stick or stone.⁵ In the jungles of Mirzapur the cairn which marks the spot where a man has been killed by a tiger, and to which each passer-by contributes a stone, is commonly in charge of a Baiga or aboriginal priest, who offers upon it a cock, a pig, or some spirits, and occasionally lights a little lamp at the shrine.⁶ Prayers, too, are sometimes offered at these piles. In Laos heaps of stones may be seen beside the path, on which the passenger will deposit a pebble, a branch, or a leaf, while he besecches the Lord of the Diamond to bestow on him good luck and long life.⁷ Tibetan travellers mutter a prayer at the cairns on the tops

¹ J. A. H. Louis, *The Gates of Thibet*, p. 111 sq.

² Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale*, ii. 564.

³ C. Sapper, "Die Gebräuche und religiösen Anschauungen der Kekchi-Indianer," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, viii. (1895), p. 197 sq.

⁴ D. Forbes, "On the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru," *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*,

ii. (1870), p. 237 sq. ; G. C. Musters, "Notes on Bolivia," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, xlvii. (1877), p. 211.

⁵ F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, p. 274.

⁶ W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 167.

⁷ E. Aymonier, *Notes sur le Laos*, p. 198.

of passes to which they add a few stones gathered by them on the ascent.¹ A native of South-Eastern Africa who places a small stone on a cairn is wont to say as he does so, "Cairn, grant me strength and prosperity."² In the same circumstances the Hottentot prays for plenty of cattle,³ and the Caffre that his journey may be prosperous, that he may have strength to accomplish it, and that he may obtain an abundant supply of food by the way.⁴ It is said that sick Bushmen used to go on pilgrimage to the cairn called the Devil's Neck and pray to the spirit of the place to heal them, while they rubbed the sick part of their body and cried "Woe! woc!" On special occasions, too, they resorted thither and implored the spirit's help.⁵ Such customs seem to indicate the gradual transformation of an old magical ceremony into a religious rite with its characteristic features of prayer and sacrifice. Yet behind these later accretions, as we may perhaps regard them, it seems possible in many, if not in all, cases to discern the nucleus to which they have attached themselves, the original idea which they tend to conceal, and in time to transmute. That idea is the transference of evil from man to a material substance which he can cast from him like an outworn garment.

Animals are often employed as the vehicle for carrying away or transferring the evil. A Guinea negro, who happens to be unwell, will sometimes tie a live chicken round his neck, so that it lies on his breast. When the bird flaps its wings

¹ T. T. Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce* (London, 1871), p. 275.

² J. Macdonald, "Manneis, Customs, etc., of South African Tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xx. (1891), p. 126.

³ Sir James E. Alexander, *Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa*, i. 166.

⁴ S. Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria*, p. 211 sq. When the Bishop of Capetown once passed a heap of stones on the top of a mountain in the Amapondo country he was told that "it was customary for every traveller to add one to the heap that it might have a favourable influence on his journey, and enable him to arrive

at some kraal while the pot is yet boiling" (J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal*, p. 217). Here there is no mention of a prayer. Similarly a Basuto on a journey, when he fears that the friend with whom he is going to stay may have eaten up all the food before his guest's arrival, places a stone on a cairn to avert the danger (Casalis, *The Basutos*, p. 272). The reason alleged for the practice in these cases is probably equivalent to the one assigned by the Melanesians and others; by ridding the traveller of his fatigue it enables him to journey faster and so to reach his destination before supper is over.

⁵ Th. Hahn, "Die Buschmänner," *Globus*, xviii. 141. As to the cairn in question, see above, p. 9.

or cheeps, the man thinks it a good sign, supposing the chicken to be afflicted with the very pain from which he hopes soon to be released, or which he would otherwise have to endure.¹ When a Moor has a headache, he will sometimes take a lamb or a goat and beat it till it falls down, believing that the headache will thus be transferred to the animal.² After an illness, a Bechuana king seated himself upon an ox which lay stretched on the ground. The native doctor next poured water on the king's head till it ran down over his body. Then the head of the ox was held in a vessel of water till the animal expired; whereupon the doctor declared, and the people believed, that the ox died of the king's disease, which had been transferred to it from the king.³ Amongst the Malagasy the vehicle for carrying away evils is called a *faditra*. "The *faditra* is anything selected by the *sikidy* [divining-board] for the purpose of taking away any hurtful evils or diseases that might prove injurious to an individual's happiness, peace, or prosperity. The *faditra* may be either ashes, cut money, a sheep, a pumpkin, or anything else the *sikidy* may choose to direct. After the particular article is appointed, the priest counts upon it all the evils that may prove injurious to the person for whom it is made, and which he then charges the *faditra* to take away for ever. If the *faditra* be ashes, it is blown, to be carried away by the wind. If it be cut money, it is thrown to the bottom of deep water, or where it can never be found. If it be a sheep, it is carried away to a distance on the shoulders of a man, who runs with all his might, mumbling as he goes, as if in the greatest rage against the *faditra* for the evils it is bearing away. If it be a pumpkin, it is carried on the shoulders to a little distance, and there dashed upon the ground with every appearance of fury and indignation."⁴ A Malagasy was informed by a diviner that he was doomed to a bloody death, but that possibly he might avert his fate by

¹ J. Smith, *Trade and Travels in the Gulph of Guinea* (London, 1851), p. 77.

² Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, p. 117.

³ John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, Second Journey*, ii. 207 sq.

⁴ W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, i. 422 sq.; cp. *id.*, pp. 232, 435, 436 sq.; Sibree, *The Great African Island*, p. 303 sq. As to divination by the *sikidy*, see Sibree, "Divination among the Malagasy," *Folk-lore*, iii. (1892), pp. 193-226.

performing a certain rite. Carrying a small vessel full of blood upon his head, he was to mount upon the back of a bullock; while thus mounted, he was to spill the blood upon the bullock's head, and then send the animal away into the wilderness, whence it might never return.¹

The Battas of Sumatra have a ceremony which they call "making the curse to fly away." When a woman is childless, a sacrifice is offered to the gods of three grasshoppers, representing a head of cattle, a buffalo, and a horse. Then a swallow is set free, with a prayer that the curse may fall upon the bird and fly away with it.² At the cleansing of a leper and of a house suspected of being tainted with leprosy, the Jews let a bird fly away.³ Among the Majhwar, a Dravidian race of South Mirzapur, if a man has died of a contagious disease, such as cholera, the village priest walks in front of the funeral procession with a chicken in his hands, which he lets loose in the direction of some other village as a scapegoat to carry the infection away. None but another very experienced priest would afterwards dare to touch or eat such a chicken.⁴ In Morocco most wealthy Moors keep a wild boar in their stables, in order that the jinn and evil spirits may be diverted from the horses and enter into the boar.⁵ Amongst the Burghers or Badagas of the Neilgherry Hills in Southern India, when a death has taken place, the sins of the deceased are laid upon a buffalo calf. A set form of confession of sins, the same for every one, is recited aloud, then the calf is set free, and is never afterwards used for common purposes. "The idea of this ceremony is that the sins of the deceased enter the calf, or that the task of his absolution is laid on it. They say that the calf very soon disappears, and that it is never after heard of."⁶

¹ W. Ellis, *op. cit.* i. 374; Sibree, *The Great African Island*, p. 304; *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine*, iii. 263.

² Ködding, "Die Batakischen Götter," *Allgemeine Missionarische Zeitschrift*, xii. (1885), p. 478.

³ Leviticus xiv. 7, 53. For a similar use in Arabia see Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentumes*, p. 156; W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,² p. 422.

⁴ W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, iii. 434.

⁵ A. Leareil, *Morocco and the Moors* (London, 1876), p. 301.

⁶ H. Harkness, *Singular Aboriginal Race of the Neilgherry Hills*, p. 133; Metz, *The Tribes inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills*, p. 78; Jagor, "Ueber die Badagas im Nilgiri-Gebirge," *Verhandl. d. Berlin. Gesell. f. Anthrop.* (1876), p. 196 sq. For the custom

Again, men sometimes play the part of scapegoat by diverting to themselves the evils that threaten others. When a Cinghalese is dangerously ill, and the physicians can do nothing, a devil-dancer is called in, who by making offerings to the devils, and dancing in the masks appropriate to them, conjures these demons of disease, one after the other, out of the sick man's body and into his own. Having thus successfully extracted the cause of the malady, the artful dancer lies down on a bier, and shamming death, is carried to an open place outside the village. Here, being left to himself, he soon comes to life again, and hastens back to claim his reward.¹ In 1590 a Scotch witch of the name of Agnes Sampson was convicted of curing a certain Robert Kers of a disease "laid upon him by a westland warlock when he was at Dumfries, whilk sickness she took upon herself, and kept the same with great groaning and torment till the morn, at whilk time there was a great din heard in the house." The noise was made by the witch in her efforts to shift the disease, by means of clothes, from herself to a cat or dog. Unfortunately the attempt partly miscarried. The disease missed the animal and hit Alexander Douglas of Dalkeith, who dwined and died of it, while the original patient, Robert Kers, was made whole.² The Dyaks believe that certain men possess in themselves the power of neutralising bad omens. So, when evil omens have alarmed a farmer for the safety of his crops, he takes a small portion of his farm produce to one of these wise men, who eats it raw for a small consideration, "and thereby appropriates to himself the evil omen, which in him becomes innocuous, and thus delivers the other from the ban of the *pemali* or taboo."³

In Travancore, when a rajah is near his end, they seek out a holy Brahman, who consents to take upon himself the

of letting a bullock go loose after a death, compare also Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life*, p. 409; Ibbetson, *Settlement Report of the Panipat, Tahsil, and Karnal Parganah of the Karnal District* (Allahabad, 1883), p. 137. In the latter case it is said that the animal is let loose "to become a pest." Perhaps the older idea was that the animal carried away death from the survivors. The idea of sin is not primitive.

¹ A. Grünwedel, "Sinhalesische Masken," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, vi. (1893), p. 85 sq.

² Dalryell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 104 sq. I have modernised the spelling.

³ J. Perham, "Sea Dyak Religion," *Journ. Straits Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 10 (December 1882), p. 232.

sins of the dying man in consideration of the sum of ten thousand rupees. Thus prepared to immolate himself on the altar of duty as a vicarious sacrifice for sin, the saint is introduced into the chamber of death, and closely embraces the dying rajah, saying to him, "O King, I undertake to bear all your sins and diseases. May your Highness live long and reign happily." Having thus, with a noble devotion, taken to himself the sins of the sufferer, and likewise the rupees, he is sent away from the country and never more allowed to return.¹ Closely akin to this is the old Welsh custom known as "sin-eating." According to Aubrey, "In the County of Hereford was an old Custome at funeralls to hire poor people, who were to take upon them all the sinnes of the party decessed. One of them, I remember, lived in a cottage on Rosse-high way (he was a long, leane, ugly, lamentable poor raskal). The manner was that when the Corps was brought out of the house and layd on the Biere; a Loafe of bread was brought out, and delivered to the Sinne-eater over the corps, as also, a Mazar-bowle of maple (Gossips bowle) full of beer, which he was to drinke up, and sixpence in money, in consideration whereof he took upon him (ipso facto) all the Sinnes of the Defunct, and freed him (or her) from walking after they were dead. . . . I believe this custom was heretofore used over all Wales. . . . In North Wales the Sinne-eaters are frequently made use of; but there, instead of a Bowle of Beere, they have a bowle of Milke."² According to a letter dated February 1, 1714-15, "within the memory of our fathers, in Shropshire, in those villages adjoyning to Wales, when a person dyed, there was notice given to an old sire (for so they called him), who presently repaired to the place where the decessed lay, and stood before the door of the house, when some of the family came out and furnished him with a cricket, on which he sat down facing the door. Then they gave him a groat, which he put in his pocket; a crust of bread, which he eat; and a full bowle of ale, which he drank off at a draught. After this he got up from the cricket and pronounced, with a com-

¹ S. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, p. 136.

² Aubrey, *Remains of Gentilisme and Jndaisme* (Folk-lore Society, 1881), p. 35 sq.

posed gesture, the ease and rest of the soul departed for which he would pawn his own soul. This I had from the ingenious John Aubrey, Esq."¹ In recent years some doubt has been thrown on Aubrey's account of the custom.² The practice, however, is reported to have prevailed in a valley not far from Llandebie to a recent period. An instance was said to have occurred about fifty years ago.³

Aubrey's statement is moreover supported by the analogy of similar customs in India. When the Rajah of Tanjore died in 1801, some of his bones and the bones of the two wives, who were burned with his corpse, were ground to powder and eaten, mixed with boiled rice, by twelve Brahmans. It was believed that the sins of the deceased passed into the bodies of the Brahmans, who were paid for the service.⁴ A Brahman, resident in a village near Raipur, stated that he had eaten food (rice and milk) out of the hand of the dead Rajah of Bilaspur, and that in consequence he had been placed on the throne for the space of a year. At the end of the year he had been given presents and then turned out of the territory and forbidden apparently to return. He was an outcast among his fellows for having eaten out of a dead man's hand.⁵ A similar custom is believed to obtain in the hill states about Kangra, and to have given rise to a caste of "outcaste" Brahmans. At the funeral of a Rani of Chamba rice and ghee were eaten out of the hands of the corpse by a Brahman paid for the purpose. Afterwards a stranger, who had been caught outside the Chamba territory, was given the costly wrappings of the corpse, then told to depart and never show his face in the

¹ Bagford's letter in Leland's *Collecanea*, i. 76, quoted by Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 246 sq., Bohn's ed.

² In the *Academy*, 13th Nov. 1875, p. 505, Mr. D. Silvan Evans stated that he knew of no such custom anywhere in Wales; and Miss Burne knows no example of it in Shropshire (Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 307 sq.).

³ The authority for the statement is a Mr. Moggridge, reported in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, second series, iii. 330. But Mr. Moggridge did not

speak from personal knowledge, and as he appears to have taken it for granted that the practice of placing bread and salt upon the breast of a corpse was a survival of the custom of "sin-eating," his evidence must be received with caution. He repeated his statement, in somewhat vaguer terms, at a meeting of the Anthropological Institute, 14th December 1875. See *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* v. (1876), p. 423 sq.

⁴ Dubois, *Mœurs des Peuples de l'Inde*, ii. 32.

⁵ R. Richardson, in *Panjab Notes and Queries*, i. p. 84, § 674.

country again.¹ In Oude when an infant was killed it used to be buried in the room where it had been born. On the thirteenth day afterwards the priest had to cook and eat his food in that room. By doing so he was supposed to take the whole sin upon himself and to cleanse the family from it.² At Utch Kurgan in Turkistan Mr. Schuyler saw an old man who was said to get his living by taking on himself the sins of the dead, and thenceforth devoting his life to prayer for their souls.³

In Tahiti, where the bodies of chiefs and persons of rank were embalmed and preserved above ground in special sheds or houses erected for them, a priest was employed at the funeral rites who bore the title of the "corpse-praying priest." His office was singular. When the house for the dead had been prepared, and the corpse placed on the platform or bier, the priest ordered a hole to be made in the floor, near the foot of the platform. Over this he prayed to the god by whom it was supposed that the soul of the deceased had been called away. The purport of his prayer was that all the dead man's sins, especially the one for which his soul had been required of him, might be deposited there, that they might not attach in any degree to the survivors, and that the anger of the god might be appeased. He next addressed the corpse, usually saying, "With you let the guilt now remain." The pillar or post of the corpse, as it was called, was then planted in the hole, and the hole filled up. As soon as the ceremony of depositing the sins in the hole was over, all who had touched the body or the garments of the deceased, which were buried or destroyed, fled precipitately into the sea, to cleanse themselves from the pollution which they had contracted by touching the corpse. They also cast into the sea the garments they had worn while they were performing the last offices to the dead. Having finished their ablutions, they gathered a few pieces of coral from the bottom of the sea, and returning with them to the house, addressed the corpse, saying, "With you may the pollution

¹ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, i. p. 86, § 674, ii. p. 93, § 559. Some of these customs have been already referred to in a different connection. See above,

vol. ii. p. 30 sq.

² *Panjab Notes and Queries*, iii. p. 179, § 745.

³ E. Schuyler, *Turkistan*, ii. 28.

be." So saying they threw down the coral on the top of the hole which had been dug to receive the sins and the defilement of the dead.¹ In this instance the sins of the departed, as well as the pollution which the primitive mind commonly associates with death, are not borne by a living person, but buried in a hole. Yet the fundamental idea—that of the transference of sins—is the same in the Tahitian as in the Welsh and Indian customs; whether the vehicle or receptacle destined to catch and draw off the evil be a person, an animal, or a thing, is for the purpose in hand a matter of little moment.²

The examples of the transference of evil hitherto adduced have been mostly drawn from the customs of savage or barbarous peoples. But similar attempts to shift the burden of disease, misfortune, and sin from one's self to another person, or to an animal or thing, have been common also among the civilised nations of Europe, both in ancient and modern times. A Roman cure for fever was to pare the patient's nails, and stick the parings with wax on a neighbour's door before sunrise; the fever then passed from the sick man to his neighbour.³ Similar devices must have been resorted to by the Greeks; for in laying down laws for his ideal state, Plato thinks it too much to expect that men should not be alarmed at finding certain wax figures adhering to their doors or to the tombstones of their parents, or lying at cross-roads.⁴ Among the ruins of the great sanctuary of Aesculapius, which have been excavated of late years in an open valley among the mountains of Epidaurus, inscriptions have been found recording the miraculous cures which the god of healing performed for his faithful worshippers. One

¹ W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i. 401 sqq.

² The Welsh custom of "sin-eating" has been interpreted by Mr. E. S. Hartland as a modification of an older custom of eating the corpse. See his article, "The Sin-eater," *Folk-lore*, iii. (1892), 145-157; *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 291 sqq., iii. p. ix. I cannot think his interpretation probable or borne out by the evidence. The Burgher custom of transferring the sins of the dead to a calf which is then let loose and never used again (above, p. 15), the Tahitian custom of burying

the sins of a person whose body is carefully preserved by being embalmed, and the Travancore custom of transferring the sins of a Rajah before his death, establish the practice of transferring sins in cases where there can be no question of eating the corpse. The original intention of such practices was perhaps not so much to take away the sins of the deceased as to rid the survivors of the dangerous pollution of death. This comes out to some extent in the Tahitian custom.

³ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 86.

⁴ Plato, *Laws*, xi. 12, p. 933 B.

of them tells how a certain Pandarus, a Thessalian, was freed from the letters which, as a former slave or prisoner of war, he bore tattooed or branded on his brow. He slept in the sanctuary with a fillet round his head, and in the morning he discovered to his joy that the marks of shame—the blue or scarlet letters—had been transferred from his brow to the fillet. By and by there came to the sanctuary a wicked man, also with brands or tattoo marks on his face, who had been charged by Pandarus to pay his debt of gratitude to the god, and had received the cash for the purpose. But the cunning fellow thought to cheat the god and keep the money all to himself. So when the god appeared to him in a dream and asked anxiously after the money, he boldly denied that he had it, and impudently prayed the god to remove the ugly marks from his own brazen brow. He was told to tie the fillet of Pandarus about his head, then to take it off, and look at his face in the water of the sacred well. He did so, and sure enough he saw on his forehead the marks of Pandarus in addition to his own.¹ In the fourth century of our era Marcellus of Bordeaux prescribed a cure for warts, which has still a great vogue among the superstitious in various parts of Europe. Doubtless it was an old traditional remedy in the fourth, and will long survive the expiry of the nineteenth century. You are to touch your warts with as many little stones as you have warts; then wrap the stones in an ivy leaf, and throw them away in a thoroughfare. Whoever picks them up will get the warts, and you will be rid of them.² A similar cure for warts, with such trifling variations as the substitution of peas or barley for pebbles, and a rag or a piece of paper for an ivy leaf, has been prescribed in modern times in Italy, France, England, and Scotland.³

¹ Εφemeris αρχαιολογική, 1883, col. 213, 214.

² Marcellus, *De medicamentis*, xxxiv. 102. A similar cure is described by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xii. 149); you are to touch the warts with chick-peas on the first day of the moon, wrap the peas in a cloth, and throw them away behind you. But Pliny does not say that the warts will be transferred to the person who picks up the peas. On this subject see further J. Hardy,

"Wart and wen cures," *Folk-lore Record*, i. (1878), pp. 216-228.

³ Zanetti, *La medicina delle nostre donne*, p. 224 sq.; Thiers, *Traité des Superstitions* (Paris, 1679), p. 321; B. Souché, *Croyances prévisions et traditions diverses*, p. 19; J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. 248, § 576; Hatland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk-lore*, p. 157; G. W. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 41; W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 49.

Another favourite way of passing on your warts to somebody else is to make as many knots in a string as you have warts; then throw the string away or place it under a stone. Whoever treads on the stone or picks up the thread will get the warts instead of you; sometimes to complete the transference it is thought necessary that he should undo the knots.¹ Or you need only place the knotted thread before sunrise in the spout of a pump; the next person who works the pump will be sure to get your warts.² Equally effective methods are to rub the troublesome excrescences with down or fat, or to bleed them on a rag, and then throw away the down, the fat, or the bloody rag. The person who picks up one or other of these things will be sure to release you from your warts by involuntarily transferring them to himself.³ People in the Orkney Islands will sometimes wash a sick man, and then throw the water down at a gateway, in the belief that the sickness will leave the patient and be transferred to the first person who passes through the gate.⁴ A Bavarian cure for fever is 'to write upon a piece of paper, "Fever, stay away, I am not at home," and to put the paper in somebody's pocket. The latter then catches the fever, and the patient is rid of it.⁵ Or the sufferer may cure himself by sticking a twig of the elder-tree in the ground without speaking. The fever then adheres to the twig, and whoever pulls up the twig will catch the disease.⁶ A Bohemian prescription for the same malady is this. Take an empty pot, go with it to a cross-road, throw it down, and run away. The first person who kicks against the pot will catch your fever, and you will be cured.⁷ In Oldenburg they say that when a person lies sweating with fever, he should take a piece of money to himself in bed. The money is

¹ L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sage aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, ii. 71, § 85; E. Monseur, *Le Folklore Wallon*, p. 29; H. Zahler, *Die Krankheit im Volksglauben des Simmenthals* (Bern, 1898), p. 93; R. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde*, p. 306.

² A. Birlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, i. 483.

³ Thiers, *Souché*, Strackerjan, Monseur, *l.c.*

⁴ Ch. Rogers, *Social Life in Scotland*, iii. 226.

⁵ G. Lammer, *Volksmedizin und medizinischer Aberglaube in Bayern*, p. 264.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 263.

⁷ J. G. Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 167, § 1180.

afterwards thrown away on the street, and whoever picks it up will catch the fever, but the original patient will be rid of it.¹

Often in Europe, as among savages, an attempt is made to transfer a pain or malady from a man to an animal. Grave writers of antiquity recommended that, if a man be stung by a scorpion, he should sit upon an ass with his face to the tail, or whisper in the animal's ear, "A scorpion has stung me"; in either case, they thought, the pain would be transferred from the man to the ass.² Many cures of this sort are recorded by Marcellus. For example, he tells us that the following is a remedy for toothache. Standing booted under the open sky on the ground, you catch a frog by the head, spit into its mouth, ask it to carry away the ache, and then let it go. But the ceremony must be performed on a lucky day and at a lucky hour.³ In Cheshire the ailment known as aphtha or thrush, which affects the mouth or throat of infants, is not uncommonly treated in much the same manner. A young frog is held for a few moments with its head inside the mouth of the sufferer, whom it is supposed to relieve by taking the malady to itself. "I assure you," said an old woman who had often superintended such a cure, "we used to hear the poor frog whooping and coughing, mortal bad, for days after; it would have made your heart ache to hear the poor creature coughing as it did about the garden."⁴ Again Marcellus tells us that if the foam from a mule's mouth, mixed with warm water, be drunk by an asthmatic patient, he will at once recover, but the mule will die.⁵ An ancient cure for the gripes, recorded both by Pliny and Marcellus, was to put a live duck to the belly of the sufferer; the pains passed from the man into the bird, to which they proved fatal.⁶ According to the same writers a

¹ L. Strackerjan, *op. cit.* i. 71, § 85.

² *Geoponica*, xiii. 9, xv. 1; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 155. The authorities for these cures are respectively Apuleius and Democritus. The latter is probably not the atomic philosopher. See *Archæological Review*, i. 180, note.

³ Marcellus, *De medicamentis*, xii. 24.

⁴ W. G. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 35 sq.

⁵ Marcellus, *De Medicamentis*, xvii. 18.

⁶ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxx. 61; Marcellus, *De Medicamentis*, xxviii. 33. The latter writer mentions (*op. cit.* xxviii. 123) that the same malady might similarly be transferred to a live frog.

stomachic complaint of which the cause was unknown might be cured by applying a blind puppy to the suffering part for three days. The secret disorder thus passed into the puppy; it died, and a post-mortem examination of its little body revealed the cause of the disease from which the man had suffered and of which the dog had died.¹ Once more, Marcellus advises that when a man was afflicted with a disorder of the intestines the physician should catch a live hare, take the huckle-bone from one of its feet and the down from the belly, then let the hare go, pronouncing as he did so the words, "Run away, run away, little hare, and take away with you the intestine pain." Further, the doctor was to fashion the down into thread, with which he was to tie the huckle-bone to the patient's body, taking great care that the thread should not be touched by any woman.² A Northamptonshire and Devonshire cure for a cough is to put a hair of the patient's head between two slices of buttered bread and give the sandwich to a dog. The animal will thereupon catch the cough and the patient will lose it.³ Sometimes an ailment is transferred to an animal by sharing food with it. Thus in Oldenburg, if you are sick of a fever you set a bowl of sweet milk before a dog and say, "Good luck, you hound! may you be sick and I be sound!" Then when the dog has lapped some of the milk, you take a swig at the bowl; and then the dog must lap again, and then you must swig again; and when you and the dog have done it the third time, he will have the fever and you will be quit of it. A peasant woman in Abbehausen told her pastor that she suffered from fever for a whole year and found no relief. At last somebody advised her to give some of her food to a dog and a cat. She did so and the fever passed from her into the animals. But when she saw the poor sick beasts always before her, she wished it undone. Then the fever left the cat and the dog and returned to her.⁴ A Bohemian cure for fever is to go out into the forest before the sun is up and look for a snipe's nest. When you have

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxx. 64; Marcellus, *De Medicamentis*, xxviii. 132.

² Marcellus, *De Medicamentis*, xxix.

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³ W. Henderson, *Folk-lore of the*

Northern Counties, p. 143; W. G. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 35.

⁴ L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, i. 72, § 86.

found it, take out one of the young birds and keep it beside you for three days. Then go back into the wood and set the snipe free. The fever will leave you at once. The snipe has taken it away. So in Vedic times the Hindoos of old sent consumption away with a blue jay. They said, "O consumption, fly away, fly away with the blue jay! With the wild rush of the storm and the whirlwind, oh, vanish away!"¹ In Oldenburg they sometimes hang up a goldfinch or a turtle-dove in the room of a consumptive patient, hoping that the bird may draw away the malady from the sufferer to itself.² A prescription for a cough in Sunderland is to shave the patient's head and hang the hair on a bush. When the birds carry the hair to their nests, they will carry the cough with it.³ In the Mark of Brandenburg a cure for headache is to tie a thread thrice round your head and then hang it in a loop from a tree; if a bird flies through the loop, it will take your headache away with it.⁴ A Bohemian remedy for jaundice is as follows. Take a living tench, tie it to your bare back and carry it about with you for a whole day. The tench will turn quite yellow and die. Then throw it into running water, and your jaundice will depart with it.⁵ In the village of Llandegla in Wales there is a church dedicated to the virgin martyr St. Tecla, where the falling sickness is, or used to be, cured by being transferred to a fowl. The patient first washed his limbs in a sacred well hard by, dropped fourpence into it as an offering, walked thrice round the well, and thrice repeated the Lord's prayer. Then the fowl, which was a cock or a hen according as the patient was a man or a woman, was put into a basket and carried round first the well and afterwards the church. Next the sufferer entered the church and lay down under the communion table till break of day. After that he offered sixpence and departed, leaving the fowl in

¹ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 166, § 1173, quoting Kuhn's translation of *Rig-veda*, x. 97. 13. A slightly different translation of the verse is given by H. Grassmann, who here follows R. Roth (*Rig-veda übersetzt*, vol. ii. p. 379).

² J. Strackerjan, *op. cit.* i. 72, § 87.

³ Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties*, p. 143.

⁴ A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 384, § 62.

⁵ Grohmann, *op. cit.* p. 230, § 1663.

the church. If the bird died, the sickness was supposed to have been transferred to it from the man or woman, who was now rid of the disorder. As late as 1855 the old parish clerk of the village remembered quite well to have seen the birds staggering about from the effects of the fits which had been transferred to them.¹

Often the sufferer seeks to shift his burden of sickness or ill-luck to some inanimate object. In Athens there is a little chapel of St. John the Baptist built against an ancient column. Fever patients resort thither, and by attaching a waxed thread to the inner side of the column believe that they transfer the fever from themselves to the pillar.² In the Mark of Brandenburg they say that if you suffer from giddiness you should strip yourself naked and run thrice round a flax-field after sunset; in that way the flax will get the giddiness and you will be rid of it.³ Sometimes an attempt is made to transfer the mischief, whatever it may be, to the moon.⁴ In Oldenburg a peasant related how he rid himself of a bony excrescence by stroking it thrice crosswise in the name of the Trinity, and then making a gesture as if he were seizing the deformity and hurling it towards the moon. In the same part of Germany a cure for warts is to stand in the light of a waxing moon so that you cannot see your own shadow, then hold the disfigured hand towards the moon, and stroke it with the other hand in the direction of the luminary. Some say that in doing this you should pronounce these words, "Moon, free me from these vermin."⁴

But perhaps the thing most commonly employed in Europe as a receptacle for sickness and trouble of all sorts is a tree or bush. The modes of transferring the mischief to it are many. For example, the Esthonians say that you ought not to go out of the house on a spring morning before you have eaten or drunk; for if you do, you may chance to hear one of "the sounds which are not heard in winter," such as the song of a bird, and that would be unlucky. They think

¹ Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 375; W. G. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 46.

² B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 82.

³ A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 386.

⁴ L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, i. 74, § 91.

that if you thus let yourself be deceived or outwitted, as they call it, by a bird, you will be visited by all sorts of ill-luck during the year; indeed it may very well happen that you will fall sick and die before another spring comes round. However, there is a way of averting the evil. You have merely to embrace a tree or go thrice round it, biting into the bark each time or tearing away a strip of the bark with your teeth. Thus the bad luck passes from you to the tree, which accordingly withers away.¹ On St. George's Day, South Slavonian lads and lasses climb thrice up and down a cornel-tree, saying, "My laziness and sleepiness to you, cornel-tree, but health and booty (?) to me." Then as they wend homewards they turn once more towards the tree and call out, "Cornel-tree! cornel-tree! I leave you my laziness and sleepiness."² The same people attempt to cure fever by transferring it to a dwarf elder-bush. Having found such a bush with three shoots springing from the root, the patient grasps the points of the three shoots in his hand, bends them down to the ground, and fastens them there with a stone. Under the arch thus formed he creeps thrice; then he cuts off or digs up the three shoots, saying, "In three shoots I cut three sicknesses out. When these three shoots grow young again, may the fever come back."³ A Bulgarian cure for fever is to run thrice round a willow-tree at sunrise, crying, "The fever shall shake thee, and the sun shall warm me."⁴ In the Greek island of Karpathos the priest ties a red thread round the neck of a sick person. Next morning the friends of the patient remove the thread and go out to the hillside, where they tie the thread to a tree, thinking that they thus transfer the sickness to the tree.⁵ Italians attempt to cure fever in like manner by fastening it to a tree. The sufferer ties a thread round his left wrist at night, and hangs the thread on a tree next morning. The fever is thus believed to be tied up to the tree, and the patient to be rid of it; but he must be careful not to pass by that tree again, otherwise the fever

¹ F. J. Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren und äussern Leben der Esken*, p. 451 sq.

² F. S. Krauss, *Volks Glaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 35 sq.

³ Krauss, *op. cit.* p. 39.

⁴ A. Strass, *Die Bulgaren* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 400, cp. p. 401.

⁵ *Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1886, p. 239.

would break loose from its bonds and attack him afresh.¹ An old French remedy for fever was to bind the patient himself to a tree and leave him there for a time; some said the ceremony should be performed fasting and early in the morning, that the cord or straw rope with which the person was bound to the tree should be left there to rot, and that the sufferer should bite the bark of the tree before returning home.² In Bohemia the friends of a fever patient will sometimes carry him head foremost, by means of straw ropes, to a bush, on which they dump him down. Then he must jump up and run home. The friends who carried him also flee, leaving the straw ropes and likewise the fever behind them on the bush.³ Sometimes the sickness is transferred to the tree by making a knot in one of its boughs. Thus in Mecklenburg a remedy for fever is to go before sunrise to a willow-tree and tie as many knots in one of its branches as the fever has lasted days; but going and coming you must be careful not to speak a word.⁴ A Flemish cure for the ague is to go early in the morning to an old willow, tie three knots in one of its branches, say, "Good-morrow, Old One, I give thee the cold; good-morrow, Old One," then turn and run away without looking round.⁵ In Rhenish Bavaria the cure for gout is similar. The patient recites a spell or prayer while he stands at a willow-bush holding one of its boughs. When the mystic words have been spoken, he ties a knot in the bough and departs cured. But all his life long he must never go near that willow-bush again, or the gout will come back to him.⁶ In Sonnenberg, if you would rid yourself of gout you should go to a young fir-tree and tie a knot in one of its twigs, saying, "God greet thee, noble fir. I bring thee my gout. Here will I tie a knot and bind my gout into it. In the name," etc.⁷

¹ Zanetti, *La medicina delle nostre donne*, p. 73.

² Thiers, *Traité des Superstitions* (Paris, 1679), p. 323 sq.

³ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 167, § 1178. A Belgian cure of the same sort is reported by J. W. Wolf (*Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. 223 (wrongly numbered 219), § 256).

⁴ J. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, i. 74, § 90.

⁵ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ ii. 979.

⁶ *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iv. 2. p. 406.

⁷ A. Schleicher, *Völkstümliches aus Sonnenberg*, p. 150; A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen*, p. 283, § 82.

Not far from Marburg, at a place called NeuhoF, there is a wood of birches. Thither on a morning before sunrise, in the last quarter of the moon, bands of gouty people may often be seen hobbling in silence. Each of them takes his stand before a separate tree and pronounces these solemn words: "Here stand I before the judgment bar of God and tie up all my gout. All the disease in my body shall remain tied up in this birch-tree." Meanwhile the good physician ties a knot in a birch-twigg, repeating thrice, "In the name of the Father," etc.¹ Another way of transferring gout from a man to a tree is this. Pare the nails of the sufferer's fingers and clip some hairs from his legs. Bore a hole in an oak, stuff the nails and hair in the hole, stop up the hole again, and smear it with cow's dung. If, for three months thereafter, the patient is free of gout, you may be sure the oak has it in his stead.² A German cure for toothache is to bore a hole in a tree and cram some of the sufferer's hair into it.³ In these cases, though no doubt the tree suffers the pangs of gout or toothache respectively, it does so with a sort of stoical equanimity, giving no outward and visible sign of the pains that rack it inwardly. It is not always so, however. The tree cannot invariably suppress every symptom of its suffering. It may hide its toothache, but it cannot so easily hide its warts. In Cheshire if you would be rid of warts, you have only to rub them with a piece of bacon, cut a slit in the bark of an ash-tree, and slip the bacon under the bark. Soon the warts will disappear from your hand, only however to reappear in the shape of rough excrescences or knobs on the bark of the tree.⁴ At Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, there used to be certain oak-trees which were long celebrated for the cure of ague. The transference of the malady to the tree was simple but painful. A lock of the sufferer's hair was pegged into an oak; then by a sudden wrench he left his hair and his ague behind him in the tree.⁵

It seems clear that, though you may stow away your pain or sickness in a tree, there is a considerable risk of

¹ W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche*, p. 88 sq.

² C. Meyer, *Der Aberglaube des Mittelalters*, p. 104.

³ H. Zahler, *Die Krankheit im Volksglauben des Simmenthals*, p. 94.

⁴ W. G. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 38.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 39.

its coming out again. To obviate this danger common prudence suggests that you should plug or bung up the hole as tight as you can. And this, as we should naturally expect, is often done. A German cure for toothache or headache is to wrap some of the sufferer's cut hair and nails in paper, make a hole in the tree, stuff the parcel into it, and stop up the hole with a plug made from a tree which has been struck by lightning.¹ In Bohemia they say that, if you feel the fever coming on, you should pull out some of your hair, tear off a strip of a garment you are wearing, and bore a hole in a willow-tree. Having done so, you put the hair and the rag in the hole and stop it up with a wedge of hawthorn. Then go home without looking back, and if a voice calls to you, be sure not to answer. When you have complied with this prescription, the fever will cease.² In Oldenburg a common remedy for fever is to bore a hole in a tree, breathe thrice into the hole, and then plug it up. Once a man who had thus shut up his fever in a tree was jeered at by a sceptical acquaintance for his credulity. So he went secretly to the tree and drew the stopper, and out came that fever and attacked the sceptic.³ Sometimes they say that the tree into which you thus breathe your fever or ague should be a hollow willow, and that in going to the tree you should be careful not to utter a word, and not to cross water.⁴ Again, we read of a man who suffered acute pains in his arm. So "they beat up red corals with oaken leaves, and having kept them on the part affected till suppuration, they did in the morning put this mixture into an hole bored with an auger in the root of an oak, respecting the east, and stop up this hole with a peg made of the same tree; from thenceforth the pain did altogether cease, and when they took out the amulet immediately the torments returned sharper than before."⁵ These facts seem to put it beyond the reach of reasonable

¹ Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaber-glaube*,² § 490.

² Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Ge-bräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 165, § 1160.

³ L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, ii. 74 sq., § 89.

⁴ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ ii. 979.

⁵ T. J. Pettigrew, *On Superstitions connected with the History and Practice of Medicine and Surgery* (London, 1844), p. 77; W. G. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 37.

doubt that the pain or malady is actually in the tree and waiting to come out, if only it gets the chance.

Often the patient, without troubling to bore a hole in the tree, merely knocks a wedge, a peg, or a nail into it, believing that he thus pegs or nails the sickness or pain into the wood. Thus a Bohemian cure for fever is to go to a tree and hammer a wedge into it with the words "There, I knock you in, that you may come no more out to me."¹ A German way of getting rid of toothache is to go in silence before sunrise to a tree, especially a willow-tree, make a slit in the bark on the north side of the tree, or on the side that looks towards the sunrise, cut out a splinter from the place thus laid bare, poke the splinter into the aching tooth till blood comes, then put back the splinter in the tree, fold down the bark over it, and tie a string round the trunk, that the splinter may grow into the trunk as before. As it does so, your pain will vanish; but you must be careful not to go near the tree afterwards, or you will get the toothache again. And any one who pulls the splinter out will also get the toothache. He has in fact uncorked the toothache which was safely bottled up in the tree, and he must take the natural consequence of his rash act.² A simpler plan, practised in Persia as well as in France and Germany, is merely to scrape the aching tooth with a nail or a twig till it bleeds, and then hammer the nail or the twig into a tree. In the Vosges, in Voigtland; and probably elsewhere, it is believed that any person who should draw out such a nail or twig would get the toothache.³ An old lime-tree at Evessen, in Brunswick, is studded with nails of various shapes, including screw-nails, which have been driven into it by persons who suffered from aching teeth.⁴ In the Mark of Brandenburg they say that the ceremony should be per-

¹ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 167, § 1182.

² L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, I. 23, § 89; Wutke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² § 490.

³ L. F. Sauvé, *Le Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 40; A. Meyrac, *Traditions, Coutumes, Légendes et*

Contes des Ardennes, p. 174; A. Schleicher, *Völkstümliches aus Sonnenberg*, p. 149; J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch, etc., im Voigtlande*, p. 414; A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen*, p. 283, § 79; H. Zähler, *Die Krankheit im Volksglauben des Simmmenthals*, p. 93.

⁴ R. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde*, p. 307.

formed when the moon is on the wane, and that the bloody nail should be knocked, without a word being spoken, into the north side of an oak-tree, where the sun cannot shine on it; after that the person will have no more toothache so long as the tree remains standing.¹ Here it is plainly implied that the toothache is bottled up in the tree. If further proof were needed that in such cases the malady is actually transferred to the tree and stowed away in its trunk, it would be afforded by the belief that if the tree is cut down the toothache will return to the original sufferer.² Fresh confirmation is furnished by a comparison of these European customs with their parallels in India. Thus the Majhwars, a Dravidian tribe in the hill country of South Mirzapur, believe that all disease is due to ghosts, but that ghosts, when they become troublesome, can be shut up in a certain tree, which grows on a little islet in a very deep pool of the Sukandar, a tributary of the Kanhar river. Accordingly, when the country is infested by ghosts, in other words when disease is raging, a skilful wizard seeks for a piece of deer-horn in the jungle. When he has found it, he hammers it with a stone into the tree and thus shuts up the ghost. The tree is covered with hundreds of such pieces of horn.³ Again, when a new settlement is being made in some parts of the North-Western Provinces of India, it is deemed necessary to apprehend and lay by the heels the local deities, who might otherwise do a deal of mischief to the intruders on their domain. A sorcerer is called in to do the business. For days he marches about the place mustering the gods to the tuck of drum. When they are all assembled, two men known as the Earthman and the Leafman, who represent the gods of the earth and of the trees respectively, become full of the spirit, being taken possession of bodily by the local deities. In this exalted state they shout and caper about in a fine frenzy, and their seemingly disjointed ejaculations, which are really the divine voice speaking through them, are interpreted by the sorcerer.

¹ A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 384, § 66.

² H. Zähler, *loc. cit.*

³ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes*

of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, iii. 436 sq.; compare *id.*, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 24.

When the critical moment has come, the wizard rushes in between the two incarnations of divinity, clutches at the spirits which are hovering about them in the air, and pours grains of sesame through their hands into a perforated piece of the wood of the sacred fig-tree. . Then without a moment's delay he plasters up the hole with a mixture of clay and cow-dung, and carefully buries the piece of wood on the spot which is to be the shrine of the local deities. Needless to say that the gods themselves are bunged up in the wood and are quite incapable of doing further mischief, provided always that the usual offerings are made to them at the shrine where they live in durance vile.¹ In this case the source of mischief is imprisoned, not in a tree, but in a piece of one; but the principle is clearly the same. Similarly in Corea an English lady observed at a cross-road a small log with several holes like those of a mouse-trap, one of which was plugged up doubly with bungs of wood. She was told that a demon, whose ravages spread sickness in a family, had been inveigled by a sorceress into that hole and securely bunged up. It was thought proper for all passers-by to step over the incarcerated devil, whether to express their scorn and abhorrence of him, or more probably as a means of keeping him down, just as you may see a courageous and public-spirited passenger sitting on the head of a prostrate cab-horse which has fallen on the slippery pavement.²

From knocking the mischief into a tree or a log it is only a step to knocking it into a stone, a door-post, a wall, or such like. At the head of Glen Mor, near Port Charlotte, in Islay, there may be seen a large boulder, and it is said that whoever drives a nail into this stone will thereafter be secure from attacks of toothache. A farmer in Islay told an inquirer some years ago how a passing stranger once cured his grandmother of toothache by driving a horse-nail into the lintel of the kitchen door, warning her at the same time to keep the nail there, and if it should come loose just to tap it with a hammer till it had a grip again. She had

¹ W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 62 sq.

² Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, ii. 143 sq.

no more toothache for the rest of her life.¹ In Brunswick it is open to any one to nail his toothache either into a wall or into a tree, as he thinks fit; the pain is cured quite as well in the one way as in the other.² A Bohemian who fears he is about to have an attack of fever will snatch up the first thing that comes to hand and nail it to the wall. That keeps the fever from him.³ As in Europe we nail toothache or fever to a wall, so in Morocco they nail devils. A house in Mogador having been infested with devils, who threw stones about it in a way that made life a burden to the inmates, a holy man was called in to exorcise them, which he did effectually by pronouncing an incantation and driving a nail into the wall; at every stroke of the hammer a hissing sound announced that another devil had received his quietus.⁴ In modern Egypt numbers of people suffering from headache used to knock a nail into the great wooden door of the old south gate of Cairo, for the purpose of charming away the pain. A holy and miraculous personage, invisible to mortal eyes, was supposed to have one of his stations at this gate.⁵ Not far from Neuenkirchen, in Oldenburg, there is a farmhouse to which, while the Thirty Years' War was raging, the plague came lounging along from the neighbouring town in the shape of a bluish vapour. Entering the house it popped into a hole in the door-post of one of the rooms. The farmer saw his chance, and quick as thought he seized a peg and hammered it into the hole, so that the plague could not possibly get out. After a time, however, thinking the danger was past, he drew out the peg. Alas! with the peg came creeping and curling out of the hole the blue vapour once more. The plague thus let loose seized on every member of the family in that unhappy house and left not one of them alive.⁶

The simple ceremony, in which to this day the super-

¹ R. C. Maclagan, "Notes on folk-lore objects collected in Argyleshire," *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895), p. 158.

² R. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde*, p. 307.

³ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 116, § 1172.

⁴ A. Leared, *Morocco and the Moors*,

p. 275 sqq.

⁵ Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), ch. x. p. 240.

⁶ L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, ii. 120, § 428a. A similar story is told of a house in Neuenburg (*op. cit.* ii. 182, § 512c).

stitution of European peasants sees a sovereign remedy for plague and fever and toothache, has come down to us from a remote antiquity; for in days when as yet Paris and London were not, when France still revered the Druids as the masters of all knowledge, human and divine, and when our own country was still covered with virgin forests, the home of savage beasts and savage men, the same ceremony was solemnly performed from time to time by the highest magistrate at Rome, to stay the ravages of pestilence or retrieve disaster that threatened the foundations of the national life. In the fourth century before our era the city of Rome was desolated by a great plague which raged for three years, carrying off some of the highest dignitaries and a great multitude of common folk. The historian who records the calamity informs us that when a banquet had been offered to the gods in vain, and neither human counsels nor divine help availed to mitigate the violence of the disease, it was resolved for the first time in Roman history to institute dramatical performances as an appropriate means of appeasing the wrath of the celestial powers. But even this novel spectacle failed to amuse or touch, to move to tears or laughter the sullen gods. The plague still raged, and at the very moment when the actors were playing their best in the circus beside the Tiber, the yellow river rose in angry flood and drove players and spectators, wading and splashing through the fast-deepening waters, away from the show. It was clear that the gods spurned plays as well as prayers and banquets; and in the general consternation it was felt that some more effectual measure should be taken to put an end to the scourge. Old men remembered that a plague had once been stayed by the knocking of a nail into a wall; and accordingly the Senate resolved that now in their extremity, when all other means had failed, a supreme magistrate should be appointed for the sole purpose of performing this solemn ceremony. The appointment was made, the nail was knocked, and the plague ceased, sooner or later.¹ What better proof could be given of the saving virtue of a nail?

¹ Livy, viii. 1-3. The plague raged from 365 to 363 B.C., when it was happily stayed in the manner described in the text.

Twice more within the same century the Roman people had recourse to the same venerable ceremony as a cure for public calamities with which the ordinary remedies, civil and religious, seemed unable to cope. One of these occasions was a pestilence;¹ the other was a strange mortality among the leading men, which public opinion traced, rightly or wrongly, to a series of nefarious crimes perpetrated by noble matrons, who took their husbands off by poison. The crimes, real or imaginary, were set down to frenzy, and nothing could be thought of so likely to minister to minds diseased as the knocking of a nail into a wall. Search among the annals of the city proved that in a season of civil discord, when the state had been rent by party feud, the same time-honoured remedy, the same soothing balm had been applied with the happiest results to the jarring interests and heated passions of the disputants. Accordingly the old nostrum was tried once more, and again success appeared to justify the experiment.²

If the Romans in the fourth century before Christ thus deemed it possible to rid themselves of pestilence, frenzy, and sedition by hammering them into a wall, even as French and German peasants still rid themselves of fever and toothache by knocking them into a tree, their prudent ancestors appear to have determined that so salutary a measure should not be restricted in its scope to meeting special and urgent emergencies as they arose, but should regularly diffuse its benefits over the community by anticipating and, as it were, nipping in the bud evils which, left unchecked, might grow to dangerous proportions. This, we may conjecture, was the original intention of an ancient Roman law which ordained that the highest magistrate of the republic should knock in a nail every year on the thirteenth day of September. The law might be seen, couched in old-fashioned language, engraved on a tablet which was fastened to a wall of the temple of Capitoline Jupiter; and although the place where the nails were driven in is nowhere definitely stated by classical writers, there are some grounds for thinking that it may have been the same wall on which the law that

¹ Livy, ix. 28. This happened in the year 313 B.C.

² Livy, viii. 18. These events took place in 331 B.C.

sanctioned the custom was exhibited. Livy tells us that the duty of affixing the nail, at one time discharged by the consuls, was afterwards committed to dictators, whose higher rank consorted better with the dignity and importance of the function. At a later time the custom fell into abeyance, and the ancient ceremony was revived only from time to time in seasons of grave peril or extraordinary calamity, which seemed to attest the displeasure of the gods at modern ways and disposed men to bethink them of ancestral lore and to walk in the old paths.¹

In antiquity the annual practice of hammering a nail into a wall was not confined to Rome. It was observed also at Vulsinii, in Etruria, where the nails thus fixed in the temple of the goddess Nortia served as a convenient means of recording and numbering the years.² To Roman antiquaries of a later period it seemed, naturally enough, that such a practice had indeed no other object than that of marking the flight of time in ages when writing was but little used.³ Yet a little reflection will probably convince us that this, though it was doubtless a useful consequence of the custom, can hardly have been its original intention. For it will scarcely be disputed that the annual observance of the custom cannot be wholly dissociated from its occasional observance in seasons of great danger or calamity, and that whatever explanation we give of the one ought to apply to the other also. Now it is plain that if we start from the annual observance and regard it as no more than a time-

¹ Livy, vii. 3. Livy says nothing as to the place where the nails were affixed; but from Festus (p. 56 ed. Müller) we learn that it was the wall of a temple, and as the date of the ceremony was also the date of the dedication of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol (Plutarch, *Publicola*, 14), we may fairly conjecture that this temple was the scene of the rite. It is the more necessary to call attention to the uncertainty which exists on this point because modern writers, perhaps misunderstanding the words of Livy, have commonly stated as a fact what is at best only a more or less probable hypothesis.

² Livy, vii. 3. Festus speaks (p. 56 ed. Müller) of "the annual nail, which was fixed in the walls of temples for the purpose of numbering the years," as if the practice were common. From Cicero's passing reference to the custom ("*Ex hoc die clavum anni movebis*," *Epist. ad Atticum*, v. 15. 1) we see that it was matter of notoriety. Hence we may safely reject Mommsen's theory, which Mr. Waide Fowler is disposed to accept (*The Roman Festivals of the period of the Republic*, p. 234 *sq.*), that the supposed annual custom never existed except in the brains of Roman Dryadists.

³ See Livy and Festus, *llcc.*

keeper or mode of recording the years, we shall never reach an adequate explanation of the occasional observance. If the nails were merely ready reckoners of the years, how could they come to be used as supreme remedies for pestilence, frenzy, and sedition, resorted to by the state in desperate emergencies when all the ordinary resources of policy and religion had failed? On the other hand, if we start from the occasional observance and view it, in accordance with modern analogies, as a rude attempt to dispose of intangible evils as if they were things that could be handled and put away out of sight, we can readily understand how such an attempt, from being made occasionally, might come to be repeated annually for the sake of wiping out all the old troubles and misfortunes of the past year and enabling the community to start afresh, unencumbered by a fardel of ills, at the beginning of a new year. Fortunately we can show that the analogy which is thus assumed to exist between the Roman custom and modern superstition is not a merely fanciful one; in other words, it can be proved that the Romans, like modern clowns, did believe in the possibility of nailing down trouble, in a literal and physical sense, into a material substance. Pliny tells us that an alleged cure for epilepsy or the falling sickness was to drive an iron nail into the ground on the spot which was first struck by the patient's head as he fell.¹ In the light of the modern instances which have come before us, we can hardly doubt that the cure was supposed to consist in actually nailing the disease into the earth in such a way that it could not get up and attack the sufferer again. Precisely parallel is a Suffolk cure for ague. You must go by night alone to a cross-road, and just as the clock strikes the midnight hour you must turn yourself about thrice and drive a tenpenny nail up to the head into the ground. Then walk away backwards from the spot before the clock is done striking twelve, and you will miss the ague; but the next person who passes over the nail will catch the malady in your stead.² Here it is plainly assumed that the ague of which the patient is relieved has been left by him nailed down into the earth at the cross-road, and we may fairly

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 63.

² *County Folk-lore, Suffolk*, edited by Lady E. C. Gurdon, p. 14.

suppose that a similar assumption underlay the Roman cure for epilepsy. Further, we seem to be now justified in holding that originally, when a Roman dictator sought to stay a plague, to restore concord, or to terminate an epidemic of madness by knocking a nail into a wall, he was doing for the commonwealth exactly what any private man might do for an epileptic patient by knocking a nail into the ground on the spot where his poor friend had collapsed. In other words, he was hammering the plague, the discord, or the madness into a hole from which it could not get out to afflict the community again.¹

§ 14. *Expulsion of Evils*

In the foregoing section the primitive principle of the transference of ills to another person, animal, or thing was explained and illustrated. A consideration of the means taken, in accordance with this principle, to rid individuals of their troubles and distresses led us to believe that at Rome similar means had been adopted to free the whole community, at a single blow of the hammer, from diverse evils that afflicted it. I now propose to show that such attempts to dismiss at once the accumulated sorrows of a people are by no means rare or exceptional, but that on the contrary they have been made in many lands, and that from being occasional they tend to become periodic and annual.

It needs some effort on our part to realise the frame of mind which prompts these attempts. Bred in a philosophy which strips nature of personality and reduces it to the unknown cause of an orderly series of impressions on our senses, we find it hard to put ourselves in the place of the savage, to whom the same impressions appear in the guise of spirits or the handiwork of spirits. For ages the army of spirits, once so near, has been receding further and further from us, banished by the magic wand of science from hearth and home, from ruined cell and ivied tower, from

¹ The analogy of the Roman custom to modern superstitious practices has been rightly pointed out by Mr. E. S. Hartland (*Folk-lore*, iv, (1893), pp. 457, 464; *Legend of Perseus*, ii, 188), but

I am unable to accept his general explanation of these and some other practices as modes of communion with a divinity.

haunted glade and lonely mere, from the riven murky cloud that belches forth the lightning, and from those fairer clouds that pillow the silver moon or fret with flakes of burning red the golden eve. The spirits are gone even from their last stronghold in the sky, whose blue arch no longer passes, except with children, for the screen that hides from mortal eyes the glories of the celestial world. Only in poets' dreams or impassioned flights of oratory is it given to catch a glimpse of the last flutter of the standards of the retreating host, to hear the beat of their invisible wings, the sound of their mocking laughter, or the swell of angel music dying away in the distance. Far otherwise is it with the savage. To his imagination the world still teems with those motley beings whom a more sober philosophy has discarded. Fairies and goblins, ghosts and demons, still hover about him both waking and sleeping. They dog his footsteps, dazzle his senses, enter into him, harass and deceive and torment him in a thousand freakish and mischievous ways. The mishaps that befall him, the losses he sustains, the pains he has to endure, he commonly sets down, if not to the magic of his enemies, to the spite or anger or caprice of the spirits. Their constant presence wearies him, their sleepless malignity exasperates him; he longs with an unspeakable longing to be rid of them altogether, and from time to time, driven to bay, his patience utterly exhausted, he turns fiercely on his persecutors and makes a desperate effort to chase the whole pack of them from the land, to clear the air of their swarming multitudes, that he may breathe more freely and go on his way unmolested, at least for a time. Thus it comes about that the endcavour of primitive people to make a clean sweep of all their troubles generally takes the form of a grand hunting out and expulsion of devils or ghosts. They think that if they can only shake off these their accursed tormentors, they will make a fresh start in life, happy and innocent; the tales of Eden and the old poetic golden age will come true again.

Hence, before we review some examples of these spirit-hunts, it may be well to adduce evidence of the deep hold which a belief in the omnipresence and malignity of spirits has upon the primitive mind. The reader will be better

able to understand the savage remedy when he has an inkling of the nature of the evil which it is designed to combat. In citing the evidence I shall for the most part reproduce the exact words of my authorities lest I should incur the suspicion of deepening unduly the shadows in a gloomy picture.

Thus in regard to the aborigines of Australia we are told that "the number of supernatural beings, feared if not loved, that they acknowledge is exceedingly great; for not only are the heavens peopled with such, but the whole face of the country swarms with them; every thicket, most watering-places, and all rocky places abound with evil spirits. In like manner, every natural phenomenon is believed to be the work of demons, none of which seem of a benign nature, one and all apparently striving to do all imaginable mischief to the poor blackfellow."¹ "The negro," says another writer, "is wont to regard the whole world around him as peopled with invisible beings, to whom he imputes every misfortune that happens to him, and from whose harmful influence he seeks to protect himself by all kinds of magic means."² The Bantu negroes of Western Africa "regard their god as the creator of man, plants, animals, and the earth, and they hold that having made them, he takes no further interest in the affair. But not so the crowd of spirits with which the universe is peopled, they take only too much interest and the Bantu wishes they would not and is perpetually saying so in his prayers, a large percentage whereof amounts to, 'Go away, we don't want you.' 'Come not into this house, this village, or its plantations.'" Almost all these subordinate spirits are malevolent.³

Speaking of the spirits which the Indians of Guiana attribute to all objects in nature, Mr. E. F. Im Thurn observes that "the whole world of the Indian swarms with these beings. If by a mighty mental effort we could for a moment revert to a similar mental position, we should find ourselves everywhere surrounded by a host of possibly hurtful beings,

¹ A. Oldfield, "The aborigines of Australia," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, N.S., iii. (1865), p. 228.

² J. Büttikofer, "Einiges über die

Eingebomen von Liberia," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, i. (1888), p. 85.

³ Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 442 sq.

so many in number that to describe them as innumerable would fall ridiculously short of the truth. It is not therefore wonderful that the Indian fears to move beyond the light of his camp-fire after dark, or, if he is obliged to do so, carries a fire-brand with him that he may at least see among what enemies he walks; nor is it wonderful that occasionally the air round the settlement seems to the Indian to grow so full of beings, that a peaiman [sorcerer], who is supposed to have the power of temporarily driving them away, is employed to effect a general clearance of these beings, if only for a time."¹ Very different from the life of these Indians of the Guiana forests is the life of the Esquimaux on the desolate shores of Labrador; yet they too live in like bondage to the evil creatures of their own imagination. "All the affairs of life are supposed to be under the control of spirits, each of which rules over a certain element, and all of which are under the direction of a greater spirit. Each person is supposed to be attended by a special guardian, who is malignant in character, ever ready to seize upon the least occasion to work harm upon the individual whom it accompanies. As this is an evil spirit, its good offices and assistance can be obtained by propitiation only. The person strives to keep the good will of the evil spirit by offerings of food, water, and clothing." "Besides this class of spirits, there are the spirits of the sea, the land, the sky (for be it understood that the Eskimo know nothing of the air), the winds, the clouds, and everything in nature. Every cove of the seashore, every point, island, and prominent rock has its guardian spirit. All are of the malignant type and to be propitiated only by acceptable offerings from persons who desire to visit the locality where it is supposed to reside. Of course some of the spirits are more powerful than others, and these are more to be dreaded than those able to inflict less harm. These minor spirits are under the control of the great spirit, whose name is Tung ak. This one great spirit is more powerful than all the rest besides. The lesser spirits are immediately under his control and ever ready to obey his command. The shaman (or conjuror) alone is supposed to be able to deal with the Tung ak. While the shaman does not profess

¹ E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 356 sq.

to be superior to the Tung ak, he is able to enlist his assistance and thus be able to control all the undertakings his profession may call for. This Tung ak is nothing more or less than death, which ever seeks to torment and harass the lives of people that their spirits may go to dwell with him."¹

Brighter at first sight and more pleasing is the mythology of the islanders of the Pacific, as the picture of it is drawn for us by one who seems to have felt the charm of those beliefs which it was his mission to destroy. "By their rude mythology," he says, "each lovely island was made a sort of fairy-land, and the spells of enchantment were thrown over its varied scenes. The sentiment of the poet that

' Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep,'

was one familiar to their minds; and it is impossible not to feel interested in a people who were accustomed to consider themselves surrounded by invisible intelligences, and who recognised in the rising sun—the mild and silver moon—the shooting star—the meteor's transient flame—the ocean's roar—the tempest's blast, or the evening breeze—the movements of mighty spirits. The mountain's summit, and the fleecy mists that hang upon its brows—the rocky defile—the foaming cataract—and the lonely dell—were all regarded as the abode or resort of these invisible beings."² Yet the spiritual powers which compassed the life of the islanders on every side appear to have been far from friendly to man. Speaking of their beliefs touching the souls of the dead, the same writer says that the Polynesians "imagined they lived in a world of spirits, which surrounded them night and day, watching every action of their lives, and ready to avenge the slightest neglect, or the least disobedience to their injunctions, as proclaimed by their priests. These dreaded beings were seldom thought to resort to the habitations of men on errands of benevolence."³ The Tahitians, when they were

¹ L. M. Turner, "Ethnology of the Ungava district, Hudson Bay Territory," *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington,

1894), p. 193 *sq.*

² W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i. 331.

³ W. Ellis, *op. cit.* i. 406.

visited by Captain Cook, believed that "sudden deaths and all other accidents are effected by the immediate action of some divinity. If a man only stumble against a stone and hurt his toe, they impute it to an *Eatooa*; so that they may be literally said, agreeably to their system, to tread enchanted ground."¹ "The Maori gods," says a well-informed writer, "were demons, whose evil designs could only be counteracted by powerful spells and charms; these proving effectual, sacrifices and offerings were made to soothe the vanquished spirits and appease their wrath." "The gods in general appeared in the whirlwind and lightning, answering their votaries in the clap of thunder. The inferior beings made themselves visible in the form of lizards, moths, butterflies, spiders, and even flies; when they spoke it was in a low whistling tone. They were supposed to be so numerous as to surround the living in crowds, *kei te muia nga wairua penei nga wairoa*, 'the spirits throng like mosquitoes,' ever watching to inflict evil."² Again, we are informed that the popular religion of the Pelew Islanders "has reference to the gods (*kaliths*) who may be useful or harmful to men in all their doings. Their imagination peoples the sea, the wood, the earth with numerous gods, and whatever a man undertakes, be it to catch fish or fell a tree, he must first propitiate the deities, or rather guard himself against their spiteful anger, which can only be done by means of certain spells and incantations. The knowledge of these incantations is limited to a very few persons, and forms in fact the secret of the arts and industries which are plied in the islands. A master of his craft is not he who can build a good house or a faultless canoe, but he who possesses the *golay* or magic power to ban the tree-gods, that they may not prove hurtful to the workmen and to the people who afterwards use the things. All these gods of the earth, the woods, the mountains, the brooks are very mischievous and dangerous, and most diseases are caused by them. Hence the persons who possess the magic power are dreaded, frequently employed, and well paid; but in extreme cases they are regarded as sorcerers and treated accordingly. If one of

¹ Cook, *Voyages* (London, 1809), vi. 152.

² R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Mani, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*,² p. 104.

them builds a house for somebody and is dissatisfied with his remuneration, he stirs up the tree-god to avenge him. So the inhabitants of the house he has built fall sick, and if help is not forthcoming they die."¹ Of the Mortlock Islanders we are told that "their imagination peopled the whole of nature with spirits and deities, of whom the number was past finding out."²

Among the tribes who inhabit the south-eastern coasts of New Guinea "a death in a village is the occasion of bringing plenty of ghosts to escort their new companion, and perhaps fetch some one else. All night the friends of the deceased sit up and keep the drums going to drive away the spirits. When I was sleeping one night at Hood Bay, a party of young men and boys came round with sticks, striking the fences and posts of houses all through the village. This I found was always done when any one died, to drive back the spirits to their own quarters on the adjacent mountain tops. But it is the spirits of the inland tribes, the aborigines of the country, that the coast tribes most fear. The road from the interior to Port Moresby passed close to our house, and the natives told us that the barking of our English dog at night had frightened the evil spirits so effectually that they had had no ghostly visitors since we came. I was camping out one night in the bush with some coast natives, at a time when a number of the natives of the interior were hunting in the neighbourhood; noticing that the men with me did not go to sleep, I asked if they were afraid of the mountain men. 'No,' they replied, 'but the whole plain is full of the spirits who come with them.' All calamities are attributed to the power and malice of these evil spirits. Drought and famine, storm and flood, disease and death are all supposed to be brought by 'Vata' and his hosts."³ The inhabitants of Timor, an island to the south-west of New Guinea, revere the lord of heaven, the sun, the mistress of the earth, and the spirits of the

¹ J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 46.

geographischen Gesellschaft in Hamburg 1878-79, p. 36.

² J. Kubary, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *Mittheilungen der*

³ W. G. Lawes, "Notes on New Guinea and its inhabitants," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1880, p. 615.

dead. "These last dwell, some with the mistress of the earth under ground, others on graves, others in stones and springs and woods, some on mountains and some in the habitations of their kinsfolk, where they take up their abode in the middle of the principal post of the house or in copper cymbals, in swords and pikes. Others again assume the shape of pigs and deer and bees; men who have fallen in battle love especially to turn into bees, that they may roam over the earth at will. The ghosts who reside with the mistress of the earth are male and female, and their offspring swarm by myriads in the air, so that the people think you cannot stir without striking against one of them. According to their whim of the moment the ghosts are good or bad." "All diseases which are not due to infection or transmitted by inheritance are ascribed to the mistress of the earth, to the ghosts, and to their wicked offspring, who inflict them as punishments for insults and injuries, for insufficient food, for the killing of deer and of wild pigs, in which the ghosts take up their abode temporarily, and also for the sale of cymbals, swords and pikes, in which a ghost had settled."¹ The natives of Amboyna think that "woods, mountains, trees, stones, indeed the whole universe, is inhabited by a multitude of spirits, of whom many are the souls of the dead."² In Bolang Mongondo, a district of Celebes, "all calamities, great and small, of whatever kind and by whatever name they are called, that befall men and animals, villages, gardens and so forth, are attributed to evil or angry spirits. The superstition is indescribably great. The smallest wound, the least indisposition, the most trifling adversity in the field, at the fishing, on a journey or what not, is believed by the natives to be traceable to the anger of their ancestors. The superstition cripples every effort to remedy the calamities except by sacrifice. There is perhaps no country the inhabitants of which know so little about simples as Bolang Mongondo. What a native of Bolang Mongondo calls medicine is nothing but sacrifice, magic, and talismans. And the method of curing a sick man always

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, "Die Landschaft Dawan oder West-Timor," *Deutsche Geogr. Blätter*, x. 278 sq.

² G. W. W. C. van Hoëvell, *Ambon en meer bepaaldelijk de Oeliasers*, p. 148.

consists in the use of magic, or in the propitiation of angry ancestral spirits by means of offerings, or in the banishment of evil spirits. The application of one or other of these three methods depends again on the decision of the sorcerer, who plays a great part in every case of sickness."¹ In the island of Bali "all the attention paid to the siek has its root solely in the excessive superstition of these islanders, which leads them to impute every unpleasantness in life, every adversity to the influence of evil spirits or of men who are in some way in league with them. The belief in witches and wizards is everywhere great in the Indies, but perhaps nowhere is it so universal and so strong as in Bali."² In Java, we are told, it is not merely great shady trees that are believed to be the abode of spirits. "In other places also, where the vital energy of nature manifests itself strikingly and impressively, a feeling of veneration is stirred, as on the sea-shore, in deep woods, on steep mountain sides. All such spots are supposed to be the abode of spirits of various kinds, whose mighty power is regarded with reverence and awe, whose anger is dreaded, and whose favour is hoped for. But wherever they dwell, whether in scenes of loveliness that move the heart, or in spots that affect the mind with fright and horror, the nature and disposition of these spirits appear not to differ. They are a source of fear and anxiety in the one case just as much as in the other. To none of them did I ever hear moral qualities ascribed. They are mighty, they are potentates, and therefore it is well with him who has their favour and ill with him who has it not; this holds true of them all." "The number of the spirits is innumerable and inconceivable. All the phenomena of nature, which we trace to fixed laws and constant forces, are supposed by the Javanese to be wrought by spirits."³ The natives of the valley of the Barito in Borneo hold that "the air is filled with countless *hantoes* (spirits). Every object has such a

¹ N. P. Wilken en J. A. Schwarz, "Het heidendom en de Islam in Bolaang Mongondou," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendeling-gemeenschap*, xi. (1867), p. 259.

eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift van Nederlandsch Indië*, August 1880, p. 83.

² S. E. Harthoorn, "De Zending op Java en meer bepaald die van Malang," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelingengemeenschap*, iv. (1860), p. 116 sq.

³ R. van Eck, "Schetsen van het

spirit which watches over it and seeks to defend it from danger. It is these spirits especially that bring sickness and misfortune on men, and for that reason offerings are often made to them and also to the powerful *Sangsangs* (angels), whereas the supreme God, the original fountain of all good, is neglected."¹ Of the Battas of Sumatra we are told that "the key-note of their religious mood is fear of the unknown powers, a childish feeling of dependence, the outcome of a belief in supernatural influences to which man is constantly exposed, in wonders and witchcraft, which hamper his free action. They feel themselves continually surrounded by unseen beings and dependent on them for everything." "Every misfortune bespeaks the ill-will of the hostile spirits. The whole world is a meeting-place of demons, and most of the phenomena of nature are an expression of their power. The only means of remedying or counteracting their baleful influence is to drive away the spirits by means of certain words, as well as by the use of amulets and the offering of sacrifices to the guardian spirits."² To the same effect another authority on the religion of the Battas remarks that "the common man has only a very dim and misty notion of his triune god, and troubles himself far more about the legions of spirits which people the whole world around him, and against which he must always be protected by magic spells."³ The Mantras, an aboriginal race of the Malay Peninsula, "find or put a spirit everywhere, in the air they breathe, in the land they cultivate, in the forests they inhabit, in the trees they cut down, in the caves of the rocks. According to them, the demon is the cause of everything that turns out ill. If they are sick, a demon is at the bottom of it; if an accident happens, it is still the spirit who is at work; thereupon the demon takes the name of the particular evil of which he is supposed to be the cause.

¹ C. A. L. M. Schwaner, *Borneo, Beschrijving van het stroomgebied van den Barito* (Amsterdam, 1853-54), i. 176.

² J. B. Neumann, "Het Pane-en Bila-stroomgebied," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, lii. Afdeling, meer uitgebreide artikelen, No. 2, p. 287.

³ B. Hagen, "Beiträge zur Kennt-

niss der Battareligion," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxviii. (1883), p. 508. The persons of the Batta Trinity are Bataraguru, Sori, and Balabulan. The most fundamental distinction between the persons of the Trinity appears to be that one of them is allowed to eat pork, while the others are not (*ibid.* p. 505).

Hence the demon being assumed as the author of every ill, all their superstitions resolve themselves into enchantments and spells to appease the evil spirit, to render mild and tractable the fiercest beasts."¹ To the mind of the Kamtchatkan every corner of earth and heaven seemed full of spirits, whom he revered and dreaded more than God.²

In India from the earliest times down to the present day the real religion of the common folk appears always to have been a belief in a vast multitude of spirits, of whom many, if not most, are mischievous and harmful. As in Europe beneath a superficial layer of Christianity a faith in magic and witchcraft, in ghosts and goblins has always survived and even flourished among the weak and ignorant, so it has been and so it is in the East. Brahmanism, Buddhism, Islam may come and go, but the belief in magic and demons remains unshaken through them all, and, if we may judge of the future from the past, is likely to survive the rise and fall of other historical religions. For the great faiths of the world, just in so far as they are the outcome of superior intelligence, of purer morality, of extraordinary fervour of aspiration after the ideal, fail to touch and move the common man. They make claims upon his intellect and his heart to which neither the one nor the other is capable of responding. The philosophy they teach is too abstract, the morality they inculcate too exalted for him. The keener minds embrace the new philosophy, the more generous spirits are fired by the new morality; and as the world is led by such men, their faith sooner or later becomes the professed faith of the multitude. Yet with the common herd, who compose the great bulk of every people, the new religion is accepted only in outward show, because it is impressed upon them by their natural leaders whom they cannot choose but follow. They yield a dull assent to it with their lips, but in their heart they never really abandon their old superstitions; in these they cherish a faith such as they cannot repose in the creed which they nominally profess; and to these, in the trials and emergencies of life, they have recourse as to in-

¹ Borie, "Notice sur les Mantras, tribu sauvage de la péninsule Malaise," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land-*

en Volkenkunde, x. (1860), p. 434.

² S. Krascheninnikow, *Beschreibung des Landes Kamtschatka*, p. 215.

fallible remedies, when the promises of the higher faith have failed them, as indeed such promises are apt to do.

To establish for India in particular the truth of the propositions which I have just advanced, it may be enough to cite the evidence of two writers of high authority, one of whom deals with the most ancient form of Indian religion known to us, while the other describes the popular religion of the Hindoos at the present day. "According to the creed of the Vedic ages," says Professor Oldenberg, "the whole world in which man lives is animated. Sky and earth, mountain, forest, trees and beasts, the earthly water and the heavenly water of the clouds,—all is filled with living spiritual beings, who are either friendly or hostile to mankind. Unseen or embodied in visible form, hosts of spirits surround and hover about human habitations,—bestial or misshapen goblins, souls of dead friends and souls of foes, sometimes as kindly guardians, oftener as mischief-makers, bringing disease and misfortune, sucking the blood and strength of the living. A soul is attributed even to the object fashioned by human hands, whose functions are felt to be friendly or hostile. The warrior pays his devotion to the divine war-chariot, the divine arrow, the drum; the ploughman to the ploughshare; the gambler to the dice; the sacrificer, about whom naturally we have the most exact information, reveres the stone that presses out the juice of the Soma, the straw on which the gods recline, the post to which the sacrificial victim is bound, and the divine doors through which the gods come forth to enjoy the sacrifice. At one time the beings in whose presence man feels himself are regarded by him as really endowed with souls; at another time, in harmony with a more advanced conception of the world, they are imagined as substances or fluids invested with beneficent or maleficent properties: belief oscillates to and fro between the one mode of thought and the other. The art of turning to account the operations of these animated beings, the play of these substances and forces, is magic rather than worship in the proper sense of the word. The foundations of this faith and magic are an inheritance from the remotest past, from a period, to put it shortly, of shamanistic faith in spirits and souls, of shamanistic

magic. Such a period has been passed through by the forefathers of the Indo-Germanic race as well as by other peoples."¹

Coming down to the Hindoos of the present day, we find that their attitude towards the spiritual world is described as follows by Professor Monier Williams. "The plain fact undoubtedly is that the great majority of the inhabitants of India are, from the cradle to the burning-ground, victims of a form of mental disease which is best expressed by the term demonophobia. They are haunted and oppressed by a perpetual dread of demons. They are firmly convinced that evil spirits of all kinds, from malignant fiends to merely mischievous imps and elves, are ever on the watch to harm, harass, and torment them, to cause plague, sickness, famine, and disaster, to impede, injure, and mar every good work."² Elsewhere the same writer has expressed the same view somewhat more fully. "In fact," he says, "a belief in every kind of demoniacal influence has always been from the earliest times an essential ingredient in Hindu religious thought. The idea probably had its origin in the supposed peopling of the air by spiritual beings—the personifications or companions of storm and tempest. Certainly no one who has ever been brought into close contact with the Hindus in their own country can doubt the fact that the worship of at least ninety per cent of the people of India in the present day is a worship of fear. Not that the existence of good deities presided over by one Supreme Being is doubted; but that these deities are believed to be too absolutely good to need propitiation; just as in ancient histories of the Slav races, we are told that they believed in a white god and a black god, but paid adoration to the last alone, having, as they supposed, nothing to apprehend from the beneficence of the first or white deity. The simple truth is that evils of all kinds, difficulties, dangers and disasters, famines, diseases, pestilences and death, are thought by an ordinary Hindu to proceed from demons, or, more properly speaking, from devils, and from devils alone. These malignant beings are held, as we have seen, to possess

¹ H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 39 sq.

² Monier Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India*, p. 210 sq.

varying degrees of rank, power, and malevolence. Some aim at destroying the entire world, and threaten the sovereignty of the gods themselves. Some delight in killing men, women, and children, out of a mere thirst for human blood. Some take a mere mischievous pleasure in tormenting, or revel in the infliction of sickness, injury, and misfortune. All make it their business to mar or impede the progress of good works and useful undertakings."¹

It would be easy but tedious to illustrate in detail this general account of the dread of demons which prevails among the inhabitants of India at the present day. A very few particular statements must suffice. Thus, we are told that the Oraons, a Dravidian race in Bengal, "acknowledge a Supreme God, adored as Dharmi or Dharmesh, the Holy One, who is manifest in the sun, and they regard Dharmesh as a perfectly pure, beneficent being, who created us and would in his goodness and mercy preserve us, but that his benevolent designs are thwarted by malignant spirits whom mortals must propitiate, as Dharmesh cannot or does not interfere, if the spirit of evil once fastens upon us. It is, therefore, of no use to pray to Dharmesh or to offer sacrifices to him; so though acknowledged, recognised, and revered, he is neglected, whilst the malignant spirits are adored." Again, it is said of these Oraons that, "as the sole object of their religious ceremonies is the propitiation of the demons who are ever thwarting the benevolent intentions of Dharmesh, they have no notion of a service of thanksgiving." Once more, after giving a list of Oraon demons, the same writer goes on: "Besides this superstitious dread of the spirits above named, the Oraon's imagination tremblingly wanders in a world of ghosts. Every rock, road, river, and grove is haunted."² In Travancore "the minor superstitions connected with demon-worship are well-nigh innumerable; they enter into all the feelings, and are associated with the whole life of these people. Every disease, accident, or misfortune is attributed to the agency of the devils, and great caution is exercised to avoid arousing their fury."³ With regard to the inhabitants of Ceylon we are told that "the

¹ Monier Williams, *op. cit.* p. 230 sq.

² S. Mæleer, *The Land of Charity*,

³ Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 256, 257, 258. p. 207.

fiends which they conceive to be bovering around them are without number. Every disease or trouble that assails them is produced by the immediate agency of the demons sent to punish them : while, on the other hand, every blessing or success comes directly from the hands of the beneficent and supreme God. To screen themselves from the power of the inferior deities, who are all represented as wicked spirits, and whose power is by no means irresistible, they wear amulets of various descriptions ; and employ a variety of charms and spells to ward off the influence of witchcraft and enchantments by which they think themselves beset on all sides." "It is probable that, by degrees, intercourse with Europeans will entirely do away these superstitious fears, as the Cinglese of the towns have already made considerable progress in subduing their gloomy apprehensions. Not so the poor wretched peasants who inhabit the more mountainous parts of the country, and live at a distance from our settlements. These unhappy people have never for a moment their minds free from the terror of those demons who seem perpetually to hover around them. Their imaginations are so disturbed by such ideas, that it is not uncommon to see many driven to madness from this cause. Several Cinglese lunatics have fallen under my own observation ; and upon inquiring into the circumstances which had deprived them of their reason, I universally found that their wretched state was to be traced solely to the excess of their superstitious fears. The spirits of the wicked subordinate demons are the chief objects of fear among the Ceylonese ; and impress their minds with much more awe than the more powerful divinities who dispense blessings among them. They indeed think that their country is in a particular manner delivered over to the dominion of evil spirits."¹

In Eastern as well as Southern Asia the same view of nature as pervaded by a multitude of spirits, mostly mischievous and malignant, has survived the nominal establishment of a higher faith. "In spite of their long conversion, their sincere belief in, and their pure form of, Buddhism, which expressly repudiates and forbids such

¹ R. Percival, *Account of the Island of Ceylon*, second edition (London, 1805), pp. 211-213.

worship, the Burmans and Taleins (or Mons) have in a great measure kept their ancient spirit or demon worship. With the Taleins this is more especially the case. Indeed, with the country population of Pegu the worship, or it should rather be said the propitiation, of the 'nats' or spirits, enters into every act of their ordinary life, and Buddha's doctrine seems kept for sacred days and their visits to the kyoung (monastery) or to the pagoda."¹ Or, as another writer puts it, "the propitiating of the nats is a question of daily concern to the lower class Burman, while the worship at the pagoda is only thought of once a week. For the nat may prove destructive and hostile at any time, whereas the acquisition of *koothols* [merit] at the pagoda is a thing which may be set about in a business-like way, and at proper and convenient times."² But the term worship, we are informed, hardly conveys a proper notion of the attitude of the Burmese towards the nats or spirits. "Even the Karens and Kachins, who have no other form of belief, do not regard them otherwise than as malevolent beings who must be looked up to with fear, and propitiated by regular offerings. They do not want to have anything to do with the nats; all they seek is to be let alone. The bamboo pipes of spirit, the bones of sacrificial animals, the hatchets, swords, spears, bows and arrows that line the way to a Kachin village, are placed there not with the idea of attracting the spirits, but of preventing them from coming right among the houses in search of their requirements. If they want to drink, the rice spirit has been poured out, and the bamboo stoop is there in evidence of the libation; the blood-stained skulls of oxen, pigs, and the feathers of fowls show that there has been no stint of meat offerings; should the nats wax quarrelsome, and wish to fight, there are the axes and dahs with which to commence the fray. Only let them be grateful, and leave their trembling worshippers in peace and quietness."³ Similarly the Lao or Laosians of Siam, though they are nominally Buddhists, and have monks and pagodas with images

¹ Forbes, *British Burma*, p. 221 sq.

² Shway Yoe, *The Burman*, i. 276 sq.

³ Shway Yoe, *op. cit.* i. 278. "To

the Burman," says Bastian, "the whole world is filled with nats. Mountains, rivers, waters, the earth, etc., have all their nat" (*Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 497).

of Buddha, are said to pay more respect to spirits or demons than to these idols.¹ "The desire to propitiate the good spirits and to exorcise the bad ones is the prevailing influence upon the life of a Laosian. With *phees* [evil spirits] to right of him, to left of him, in front of him, behind him, all round him, his mind is haunted with a perpetual desire to make terms with them, and to ensure the assistance of the great Buddha, so that he may preserve both body and soul from the hands of the spirits."² In Corea, "among the reasons which render the shaman a necessity are these. In Korean belief, earth, air, and sea are peopled by demons. They haunt every umbrageous tree, shady ravine, crystal spring, and mountain crest. On green hill-slopes, in peaceful agricultural valleys, in grassy dells, on wooded uplands, by lake and stream, by road and river, in north, south, east, and west, they abound, making malignant sport of human destinies. They are on every roof, ceiling, fireplace, kang, and beam. They fill the chimney, the shed, the living-room, the kitchen—they are on every shelf and jar. In thousands they waylay the traveller as he leaves his home, beside him, behind him, dancing in front of him, whirring over his head, crying out upon him from earth, air, and water. They are numbered by *thousands of billions*, and it has been well said that their ubiquity is an unholy travesty of the Divine Omnipresence. This belief, and it seems to be the only one he has, keeps the Korean in a perpetual state of nervous apprehension, it surrounds him with indefinite terrors, and it may truly be said of him that he 'passes the time of his sojourning here in fear.' Every Korean home is subject to demons, here, there, and everywhere. They touch the Korean at every point in life, making his well-being depend on a continual series of acts of propitiation, and they avenge every omission with merciless severity, keeping him under this yoke of bondage from birth to death." "Koreans attribute every ill by which they are afflicted to demoniacal influence. Bad luck in any transaction, official malevolence, illness, whether sudden or prolonged, pecuniary misfortune, and loss of power or position, are due to the malignity of

¹ Pallegoix, *Description du royaume
Thaï ou Siam*, i. 42.

² C. Bock, *Temples and Elephants*,
p. 198.

demons. It is over such evils that the *Pan-su* [shaman] is supposed to have power, and to be able to terminate them by magical rites, he being possessed by a powerful demon, whose strength he is able to wield."¹

When we come westward, we find that the same belief in the omnipresence and mischievous power of spirits has prevailed from ancient times to the present day. Few people seem to have suffered more from the persistent assaults of demons than the ancient Babylonians, and the demons that preyed on them were of a particularly cruel and malignant sort, devouring the flesh and sucking the blood of their victims and not sparing the gods themselves. These baleful beings lurked in remote places, in graves, in the shadow of ruins, on the tops of mountains, in the wilderness. They glided noiselessly like serpents, entering houses through holes and crevices. To them all manner of evil was ascribed. Their presence was felt not merely in the terrible winds that swept the land, in the fevers bred of the marshes, and in the diseases engendered by the damp heat of summer. All the petty annoyances of life—a sudden fall, an unlucky word, a headache, a petty quarrel, and so forth—were set down to the agency of fiends; and all the fierce emotions that rend the mind—love, hate, jealousy, and madness—were equally the work of these invisible tormentors. Men and women stood in constant danger of them. Even the animals were not safe from their attacks. They drove birds out of their nests and struck down lambs and bulls. To forestall their assaults was impossible. They entered a man's dwelling, they roamed the streets, they made their way into food and drink. There was no place, however small, which they could not invade, none so large that they could not fill. Almost every part of the human frame was menaced by a special fiend. One demon assailed the head, another the neck, another the hands, another the hips, and so on. Indeed, they threatened the whole world with destruction, and there was none that could deliver from them save only the mighty god Marduk.² In Egypt the jinn,

¹ Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, ii. 227 sq., 229. I have taken the liberty of changing the writer's "daemon" into "demon."

² M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 260 sq.; A. Jeremias, s.v. "Marduk," Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Myth.* ii. 2352 sq.

a class of spiritual beings intermediate between angels and men, are believed to pervade the solid matter of the earth as well as the firmament, and they inhabit rivers, ruined houses, wells, baths, ovens, and so forth. So thickly do they swarm that in pouring water or other liquids on the ground an Egyptian will commonly exclaim or mutter "*Destoor!*" thereby asking the permission or craving the pardon of any jinn who might chauce to be there, and who might otherwise resent being suddenly soused with water or less savoury fluids. So too when people light a fire, let down a bucket into a well, or perform other necessary functions, they will say "Permission!" or "Permission, ye blessed!"¹ Again, in Egypt it is not considered proper to sweep out a house at night, lest in doing so you should knock against a jinn, who might avenge the insult.²

The earliest of the Greek philosophers, Thales, held that the world is full of gods or spirits;³ and the same primitive creed was expounded by one of the latest Pagan thinkers of antiquity. Porphyry declared that demons appeared in the likeness of animals, that every house and every body was full of them, and that forms of ceremonial purification, such as beating the air and so forth, had no other object but that of driving away the importunate swarms of these invisible but dangerous beings. He explained that evil spirits delighted in food, especially in blood and impurities, that they settled like flies on us at meals, and that they could only be kept at a distance by ceremonial observances, which were directed, not to pleasing the gods, but simply and solely to beating off devils.⁴ His theory of religious purification seems faithfully to reflect the creed of the savage on this subject,⁵ but a philosopher is perhaps the last person whom we should expect to find acting as a mirror of savagery. It is less surprising to meet with the same venerable doctrine, the same

¹ Lane, *Manners and Customs of the modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), chap. x. p. 231 sq.

² C. B. Klunzinger, *Bilder aus Oberägypten, der Wüste und dem Rothen Meere*, p. 382; cp. *ibid.* p. 374 sq.

³ Aristotle, *De anima*, l. 5. 17; Diogenes Laertius, l. 1. 27.

⁴ Porphyry, quoted by Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelii*, lv. 23.

⁵ Elsewhere I have attempted to show that a particular class of purifications—those observed by mourners—is intended to protect the living from the disembodied spirits of the dead (*Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv. (1886), p. 64 sqq.).

world-wide superstition in the mouth of a mediæval abbot; for we know that a belief in devils has the authority of the founder of Christianity, and is sanctioned by the teaching of the church. No Esquimaux on the frozen shores of Labrador, no Indian in the sweltering forests of Guiana, no cowering Hindoo in the jungles of Bengal, could well have a more constant and abiding sense of the presence of malignant demons everywhere about him than had Abbot Richalm, who ruled over the Cistercian monastery of Schönthal in the first half of the thirteenth century. In the curious work to which he gave the name of *Revelations*, he set forth how he was daily and hourly infested by devils, whom, though he could not see, he heard, and to whom he imputed all the ailments of his flesh and all the frailties of his spirit. If he felt squacumish, he was sure that the feeling was wrought in him by demoniacal agency. If puckers appeared on his nose, if his lower lip drooped, the devils had again to answer for it; a cough, a cold in the head, a hawking and spitting, could have none but a supernatural and devilish origin. If, pacing in his orchard on a sunny autumn morning, the portly abbot stooped to pick up the mellow fruit that had fallen in the night, the blood that mounted to his purple face was sent coursing thither by his invisible foes. If the abbot tossed on his sleepless couch, while the moonlight, streaming in at the window, cast the shadows of the stanchions like black bars on the floor of his cell, it was not the fleas and so forth that kept him awake, oh no. "Vermin," said he sagely, "do not really bite"; they seem to bite, indeed, but it is all the work of devils. If a monk snored in the dormitory, the unseemly noise proceeded not from him, but from a demon lurking in his person. Especially dangerous were the demons of intoxication. These subtle fiends commonly lodged at the taverns in the neighbouring town, but on feast days they were apt to slip through the monastery gates and glide unseen among the monks seated at the refectory table, or gathered round the roaring fire on the hearth, while the bleak wind whistled in the abbey towers, and a more generous vintage than usual glowed and sparkled in the flagons. If at such times a jolly, rosy-faced brother appeared to the carnal eye and ear to grow obstreperous or maudlin, to speak

thick or to reel and stagger in his gait, be sure it was not the fiery spirit of the grape that moved the holy man ; it was a spirit of quite a different order. Holding such views on the source of all bodily and mental indisposition, it was natural enough that the abbot should prescribe remedies which are not to be found in the pharmacopœia, and which would be asked for in vain at an apothecary's. They consisted chiefly of holy water and the sign of the cross ; this last he recommended particularly as a specific for flea-bites.¹

It is easy to suggest that the abbot's wits were unsettled, that he suffered from hallucinations, and so forth. This may have been so ; yet a mode of thought like his seems to be too common over a great part of the world to allow us to attribute it purely to mental derangement. In the Middle Ages, when the general level of knowledge was low, it seems probable that a state of mind like Richalm's may have been shared by multitudes even of educated people, who have not however, like him, left a monument of their folly to posterity. At the present day, owing to the advance and spread of knowledge, it might be difficult to find any person of acknowledged sanity holding the abbot's opinions on the subject of demons ; but in remote parts of Europe a little research might show that the creed of Porphyry and Richalm is still held, with but little variation, by the mass of the people. Thus we are told that the Roumanians of Transylvania "believe themselves to be surrounded on all sides by whole legions of evil spirits. These devils are furthermore assisted by *ismejus* (another sort of dragon), witches, and goblins, and to each of these dangerous beings are ascribed particular powers on particular days and at certain places. Many and curious are therefore the means by which the Roumanians endeavour to counteract these baleful influences ; and a whole complicated study, about as laborious as the mastering of an unknown language, is required in order to teach an unfortunate peasant to steer clear of the dangers by which he supposes himself to be beset on all sides."²

¹ C. Meyer, *Der Aberglaube des Mittelalters* (Bâle, 1884), pp. 109-111, 191 sq.

² E. Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, i. 328. The superstitions of

the Roumanians of Transylvania have been collected by W. Schmidt in his tract *Das Jahr und seine Tage in Meinung und Brauch der Rumänen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1866).

We can now understand why those general clearances of evil, to which from time to time the savage resorts, should commonly take the form of a forcible expulsion of devils. In these evil spirits primitive man sees the cause of many if not of most of his troubles, and he fancies that if he can only deliver himself from them, things will go better with him. The public attempts to expel the accumulated ills of a whole community may be divided into two classes, according as the expelled evils are immaterial and invisible or are embodied in a material vehicle or scapegoat. The former may be called the direct or immediate expulsion of evils; the latter the indirect or mediate expulsion, or the expulsion by scapegoat. We begin with examples of the former.

In the island of Rook, between New Guinea and New Britain, when any misfortune has happened, all the people run together, scream, curse, howl, and beat the air with sticks to drive away the devil (*Marsdaba*), who is supposed to be the author of the mishap. From the spot where the mishap took place they drive him step by step to the sea, and on reaching the shore they redouble their shouts and blows in order to expel him from the island. He generally retires to the sea or to the island of Lottin.¹ The natives of New Britain ascribe sickness, drought, the failure of crops, and in short all misfortunes, to the influence of wicked spirits. So at times when many people sicken and die, as at the beginning of the rainy season, all the inhabitants of a district, armed with branches and clubs, go out by moonlight to the fields, where they beat and stamp on the ground with wild howls till morning, believing that this drives away the devils.² Among the Dieri tribe of Central Australia, when a serious illness occurs, the medicine-men expel Cootchie or the devil by beating the ground in and outside of the camp with the stuffed tail of a kangaroo, until they have chased the demon away to some distance from the camp.³ In some South African tribes it is a general rule that no common man may meddle with spirits, whether good or bad, except

¹ Paul Reina, "Ueber die Bewohner der Insel Rook," *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Erdkunde*, N.F., iv. 356.

² R. Parkinson, *Im Bismarck-Archipel*, p. 142.

³ S. Gason, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895), p. 170.

to offer the customary sacrifices. Demons may baunt him and make his life a burden to him, but he must submit to their machinations until the matter is taken up by the proper authorities. A baboon may be sent by evil spirits and perch on a tree within gunshot, or regale itself in his maize-field; but to fire at the beast would be worse than suicide. As long as a man remains a solitary sufferer, he has little chance of redress. It is supposed that he has committed some crime, and that the ancestors in their wrath have sent a demon to torment him. But should his neighbours also suffer; should the baboon from choice or necessity (for men do sometimes pluck up courage to scare the brutes) select a fresh field for its depredations, or the roof of another man's barn for its perch, the case begins to wear a different complexion. The magicians now deal with the matter seriously. One man may be haunted for his sins by a demon, but a whole community infested by devils is another matter. To shoot the baboon, however, would be useless; it would merely enrage the demon and increase the danger. The first thing to do is to ascertain the permanent abode of the devil. It is generally a deep pool with overhanging banks and dark recesses. There the villagers assemble with the priests and magicians at their head, and set about pelting the demon with stones, men, women, and children all joining in the assault, while they load the object of their fear and bate with the foulest abuse. Drums too are beaten, and horns blown at intervals, and when everybody has been worked up to such a frenzy of excitement that some even fancy they see the imp dodging the missiles, he suddenly takes to flight, and the village is rid of him for a time. After that, the crops may be protected and baboons killed with impunity.¹

When a village has been visited by a series of disasters or a severe epidemic, the inhabitants of Minahassa in Celebes lay the blame upon the devils who are infesting the village and who must be expelled from it. Accordingly, early one

¹ J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth*, pp. 100-102. The writer, who describes the ceremony at first hand, remarks that "there is no periodic purging of devils, nor are more spirits than one expelled at a time." He adds:

"I have noticed frequently a connection between the quantity of grain that could be spared for making beer, and the frequency of gatherings for the purging of evils."

morning all the people, men, women, and children, quit their homes, carrying their household goods with them, and take up their quarters in temporary huts which have been erected outside the village. Here they spend several days, offering sacrifices and preparing for the final ceremony. At last the men, some wearing masks, others with their faces blackened, and so on, but all armed with swords, guns, pikes, or brooms, steal cautiously and silently back to the deserted village. Then, at a signal from the priest, they rush furiously up and down the streets and into and under the houses (which are raised on piles above the ground), yelling and striking on walls, doors, and windows, to drive away the devils. Next, the priests and the rest of the people come with the holy fire and march nine times round each house and thrice round the ladder that leads up to it, carrying the fire with them. Then they take the fire into the kitchen, where it must burn for three days continuously. The devils are now driven away, and great and general is the joy.¹ The Alfoors of Halmahera attribute epidemics to the devil who comes from other villages to carry them off. So, in order to rid the village of the disease, the sorcerer drives away the devil. From all the villagers he receives a costly garment and places it on four vessels, which he takes to the forest and leaves at the spot where the devil is supposed to be. Then with mocking words he bids the demon abandon the place.² In the Kei Islands to the south-west of New Guinea, the evil spirits, who are quite distinct from the souls of the dead, form a mighty host. Almost every tree and every cave is the lodging-place of one of these fiends, who are moreover extremely irascible and apt to fly out on the smallest provocation. To speak loudly in passing their

¹ [P. N. Wilken], "De godsdienst en godsdienstplegtigheden der Alfoeren in de Minahassa op het eiland Celebes," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, December 1849, pp. 392-394; *id.*, "Bijdragen tot de kennis van de zeden en gewoonten der Alfoeren in de Minahassa," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelingengenootschap*, vii. (1863), p. 149 *sqq.*; J. G. F. Riedel, "De Minahassa in 1825," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volken-*

kunde, xviii. (1872), p. 521 *sq.* Wilken's first and fuller account is reprinted in Graafland's *De Minahassa*, i. 117-120.

² Riedel, "Galea und Tobeloresen," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xvii. (1885), p. 82; G. A. Wilken, "Het Shamanisme bij de Volken van de Indischen Archipel," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië*, xxxvi. (1887), p. 484.

abode, to ease nature near a haunted tree or cave is enough to bring down their wrath on the offender, and he must either appease them by an offering or burn the scrapings of a buffalo's horn or the hair of a Papuan slave, in order that the smell may drive the foul fiends away. The spirits manifest their displeasure by sending sickness and other calamities. Hence in times of public misfortune, as when an epidemic is raging, and all other remedies have failed, the whole population go forth with the priest at their head to a place at some distance from the village. Here at sunset they erect a couple of poles with a cross-bar between them, to which they attach bags of rice, wooden models of pivot-guns, gongs, bracelets, and so on. Then, when everybody has taken his place at the poles and a death-like silence reigns, the priest lifts up his voice and addresses the spirits in their own language as follows: "Ho! ho! ho! ye evil spirits who dwell in the trees, ye evil spirits who live in the grottoes, ye evil spirits who lodge in the earth, we give you these pivot-guns, these gongs, etc. Let the sickness cease and not so many people die of it." Then everybody runs home as fast as their legs can carry them.¹

In the island of Nias, when a man is seriously ill and other remedies have been tried in vain, the sorcerer proceeds to exorcise the devil who is causing the illness. A pole is set up in front of the house, and from the top of the pole a rope of palm-leaves is stretched to the roof of the house. Then the sorcerer mounts the roof with a pig, which he kills and allows to roll from the roof to the ground. The devil, anxious to get the pig, lets himself down hastily from the roof by the rope of palm-leaves, and a good spirit, invoked by the sorcerer, prevents him from climbing up again. If this remedy fails, it is believed that other devils must still be lurking in the house. So a general hunt is made after them. All the doors and windows in the house are closed, except a single dormer-window in the roof. The men, shut up in the house, hew and slash with their swords right and left to the

¹ C. M. Pleyte, "Ethnographische Beschrijving der Kei-eilanden," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (1893), p. 834 sq. A briefer

account of the custom had previously been given by Riedel (*De sluit- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selbes en Papua*, p. 239).

clash of gongs and the rub-a-dub of drums. Terrified at this onslaught, the devils escape by the dormer-window, and sliding down the rope of palm-leaves take themselves off. As all the doors and windows, except the one in the roof, are shut, the devils cannot get into the house again. In the case of an epidemic the proceedings are similar. All the gates of the village, except one, are closed; every voice is raised, every gong and drum beaten, every sword brandished. Thus the devils are driven out and the last gate is shut behind them. For eight days thereafter the village is in a state of siege, no one being allowed to enter it.¹ The means adopted in Nias to exclude an epidemic from a village which has not yet been infected by it are somewhat similar; but as they exhibit an interesting combination of religious ritual with the purely magical ceremony of exorcism, it may be worth while to describe them. When it is known that a village is suffering from the ravages of a dangerous malady, the other villages in the neighbourhood take what they regard as effective measures for securing immunity from the disease. Some of these measures commend themselves to us as rational and others do not. In the first place, quarantine is established in each village, not only against the inhabitants of the infected village, but against all strangers; no person from outside is allowed to enter. In the second place, a feast is made by the people for one of their idols who goes by the name of *Fangeroe wocho*, or Protector from sickness. All the people of the village must participate in the sacrifice and bear a share of the cost. The principal idol, crowned with palm-leaves, is set up in front of the chief's house, and all the inhabitants who can do so gather about it. The names of those who cannot attend are mentioned, apparently as a substitute for their attendance in person. While the priest is reciting the spells for the

¹ Nieuwenhuis en Rosenberg, "Verslag omtrent het eiland Nias," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxx. (Batavia, 1863), p. 116 sq.; Rosenberg, *Der Malayische Archipel*, p. 174 sq. Cp. Chatelin, "Godsdienst en Bijgeloof der Niassers," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal, Land- en*

Volkenkunde, xxvi. 139; E. Modigliani, *Un viaggio a Nias*, pp. 195, 382. The Dyaks also drive the devil at the point of the sword from a house where there is sickness. See Hupe, "Korte verhandeling over de godsdienst, zeden, enz. der Dajakkers," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands Indië*, 1846, dl. lii. p. 149.

banishment of the evil spirits, all persons present come forward and touch the image. A pig is then killed and its flesh furnishes a common meal. The mouth of the idol is smeared with the bloody heart of the pig, and a dishful of the cooked pork is set before him. Of the flesh thus consecrated to the idol none but priests and chiefs may partake. Idols called *daha*, or branches of the principal idol, are also set up in front of all the other houses in the village. Moreover, bogies made of black wood with white eyes, to which the broken crockery of the inhabitants has freely contributed, are placed at the entrances of the village to scare the demon and prevent him from entering. All sorts of objects whitened with chalk are also hung up in front of the houses to keep the devil out. When eight days have elapsed, it is thought that the sacrifice has taken effect, and the priest puts an end to the quarantine. All boys and men now assemble for the purpose of expelling the evil spirit. Led by the priest, they march four times, with a prodigious noise and uproar, from one end of the village to the other, slashing the air with their knives and stabbing it with their spears to frighten the devil away. If all these efforts prove vain, and the dreaded sickness breaks out, the people think it must be because they have departed from the ways of their fathers by raising the price of victuals and pigs too high or by enriching themselves with unjust gain. Accordingly a new idol is made and set up in front of the chief's house; and while the priest engages in prayer, the chief and the magnates of the village touch the image, vowing as they do so to return to the old ways and cursing all such as may refuse their consent or violate the new law thus solemnly enacted. Then all present betake themselves to the river and erect another idol on the bank. In presence of this latter idol the weights and measures are compared, and any that exceed the lawful standard are at once reduced to it. When this has been done, they rock the image to and fro to signify, or perhaps rather to ensure, thereby that he who does not keep the new law shall suffer misfortune, or fall sick, or be thwarted in some way or other. Then a pig is killed and eaten on the bank of the river. The feast being over, each family contributes a certain sum in token that

they make restitution of their unlawful gains. The money thus collected is tied in a bundle, and the priest holds the bundle up towards the sky and down towards the earth to satisfy the god of the upper and the god of the nether world that justice has now been done. After that he either flings the bag of money into the river or buries it in the ground beside the idol. In the latter case the money naturally disappears, and the people explain its disappearance by saying that the evil spirit has come and fetched it.¹ A method like that which at the present day the people of Nias adopt for the sake of conjuring the demon of disease was employed in antiquity by the Caunians of Asia Minor to banish certain foreign gods whom they had imprudently established in their country. All the men of military age assembled under arms, and with spear-thrusts in the air drove the strange gods step by step from the land and across the boundaries.²

When cholera has broken out in a Burmese village the able-bodied men scramble on the roofs and lay about them with bamboos and billets of wood, while all the rest of the population, old and young, stand below and thump drums, blow trumpets, yell, scream, beat floors, walls, tin pans, everything to make a din. This uproar, repeated on three successive nights, is thought to be very effective in driving away the cholera demons.³ When small-pox first appeared amongst the Kumis of South-Eastern India, they thought it was a devil come from Arracan. The villages were placed in a state of siege, no one being allowed to leave or enter them. A monkey was killed by being dashed on the ground, and its body was hung at the village gate. Its blood, mixed with small river pebbles, was sprinkled on the houses, the threshold of every house was swept with the monkey's tail, and the fiend was adjured to depart.⁴ In Japan the old-fashioned method of staying an epidemic is to expel the demon of the plague from every

¹ Fr. Kramer, "Der Götzendienst der Niasser," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890), pp. 486-488.

² Herodotus, i. 172.

³ Forbes, *British Burma*, p. 233; Shway Yoe, *The Burman*, i. 282, ii. 105 sqq.; Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 98.

⁴ Lewin, *Wild Tribes of South-Eastern India*, p. 226.

house into which he has entered. The treatment begins with the house in which the malady has appeared in the mildest form. First of all a Shinto priest makes a preliminary visit to the sick-room and extracts from the demon a promise that he will depart with him at his next visit. The day after he comes again, and, seating himself near the patient, beseeches the evil spirit to come away with him. Meanwhile red rice, which is used only on special occasions, has been placed at the sufferer's head, a closed litter made of pine boughs has been brought in, and four men equipped with flags or weapons have taken post in the four corners of the room to prevent the demon from seeking refuge there. All are silent but the priest. The prayer being over, the sick man's pillow is hastily thrown into the litter, and the priest cries, "All right now!" At that the bearers double with it into the street, the people within and without beat the air with swords, sticks, or anything that comes to hand, while others assist in the cure by banging away at drums and gongs. A procession is now formed in which only men take part, some of them carrying banners, others provided with a drum, a bell, a flute, a horn, and all of them wearing fillets and horns of twisted straw to keep the demon away from themselves. As the procession starts an old man chants, "What god are you bearing away?" To which the others respond in chorus, "The god of the pest we are bearing away!" Then to the music of the drum, the bell, the flute, and the horn the litter is borne through the streets. During its passage all the people in the town who are not taking part in the ceremony remain indoors, every house along the route of the procession is carefully closed, and at the cross-roads swordsmen are stationed, who guard the street by hewing the air to right and left with their blades, lest the demon should escape by that way. The litter is thus carried to a retired spot between two towns and left there, while all who escorted it thither run away. Only the priest remains behind for half an hour to complete the exorcism and the cure. The bearers of the litter spend the night praying in a temple. Next day they return home, but not until they have plunged into a cold bath in the open air to prevent the demon from following them. The same litter serves to convey the evil

spirit from every house in the town.¹ In Corea, when a patient is recovering from the small-pox, a farewell dinner is given in honour of the departing spirit of the disease. Friends and relations are invited, and the spirit's share of the good things is packed on the back of a hobby-horse and despatched to the boundary of the town or village, while respectful farewells are spoken and hearty good wishes uttered for his prosperous journey to his own place.² In Tonquin also a banquet is sometimes given to the demon of sickness to induce him to go quietly away from the house. The most honourable place at the festive board is reserved for the fiend; prayers, caresses, and presents are lavished on him; but if he proves obdurate, they assail him with coarse abuse and drive him from the house with musket-shots.³

At Great Bassam, in Guinea, the French traveller Hecquard witnessed the exorcism of the evil spirit who was believed to make women barren. The women who wished to become mothers offered to the fetish wine-vessels or statuettes representing women suckling children. Then being assembled in the fetish hut, they were sprinkled with rum by the priest, while young men fired guns and brandished swords to drive away the demon.⁴ The Gallas try to drive away fever by firing guns, shouting, and lighting great fires.⁵ When sickness was prevalent in a Huron village, and all other remedies had been tried in vain, the Indians had recourse to the ceremony called *Lonouyroya*, "which is the principal invention and most proper means, so they say, to expel from the town or village the devils and evil spirits

¹ This description is taken from a newspaper-cutting, which was sent to me from the west of Scotland in October 1890, but without the name or date of the paper. The account, which is headed "Exorcism of the pest demon in Japan," purports to be derived from a series of notes on medical customs of the Japanese, which were contributed by Dr. C. H. H. Hall, of the U.S. Navy, to the *Sei-I Kwai Medical Journal*.

² Masanao Koike, "Zwei Jahren in Korea," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, iv. (1891), p. 10; Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, ii. 240.

³ *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*, xvi. 206. It will be noticed that in this and the preceding case the principle of expulsion is applied for the benefit of an individual, not of a whole community. Yet the method of procedure in both is so similar to that adopted in the cases under consideration that I have allowed myself to cite them.

⁴ Hecquard, *Reise an die Küste und in das Innere von West Afrika*, p. 43.

⁵ Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die materielle Cultur der Dandkil, Galla und Somali*, p. 177.

which cause, induce, and import all the maladies and infirmities which they suffer in body and mind." Accordingly, one evening the men would begin to rush like madmen about the village, breaking and upsetting whatever they came across in the wigwams. They threw fire and burning brands about the streets, and all night long they ran howling and singing without cessation. Then they all dreamed of something, a knife, dog, skin, or whatever it might be, and when morning came they went from wigwam to wigwam asking for presents. These they received silently, till the particular thing was given them which they had dreamed about. On receiving it they uttered a cry of joy and rushed from the hut, amid the congratulations of all present. The health of those who received what they had dreamed of was believed to be assured; whereas those who did not get what they had set their hearts upon regarded their fate as sealed.¹

¹ Sagard, *Le Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, p. 279 sq. (195 sq. of the Paris reprint). Compare *Relations des Jésuites*, 1639, pp. 88-92 (Canadian reprint), from which it appears that each man demanded the subject of his dream in the form of a riddle, which the hearers tried to solve. The custom of asking riddles at certain seasons or on certain special occasions is curious and has not yet, so far as I know, been explained. Perhaps enigmas were originally circumlocutions adopted at times when for certain reasons the speaker was forbidden the use of direct terms. They appear to be especially employed in the neighbourhood of a dead body. Thus in Bolang Mongondo (Celebes) riddles may never be asked except when there is a corpse in the village. See N. P. Wilken to J. A. Schwarz, "Allerlei over het land en volk van Boloang Mongondou," *Afdeelingen van rege het Nederlandsche Zendingenootschap*, xi. (1867), p. 357. In the Aru archipelago, while a corpse is uncoffined, the watchers propound riddles to each other, or rather they think of things which the others have to guess. See Riedel, *De sluis en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 267 sq. In Brittany after a burial, when the rest have gone to

partake of the funeral banquet, old men remain behind in the graveyard, and having seated themselves on mallows, ask each other riddles. See A. de Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 199. In Vedic times the priests proposed enigmas to each other at the great sacrifice of a horse. See H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 475. Among Turkish tribes of Central Asia girls publicly propound riddles to their wooers, who are punished if they cannot read them. See H. Vambery, *Das Türkenvolk*, p. 232 sq. Among the Alfors of Central Celebes riddles may only be asked during the season when the fields are being tilled and the crops are growing. People meeting together at this time occupy themselves with asking riddles and telling stories. As soon as some one has found the answer to a riddle, they all cry out, "Make our rice to grow, make fat ears to grow both in the valleys and on the heights." But during the months which elapse between harvest and the preparation of new land for tillage the propounding of enigmas is strictly forbidden. The writer who reports the custom conjectures that the cry "Make our rice to grow" is addressed to the souls of the ancestors. See A. C.

The observance of such ceremonies, from being occasional, tends to become periodic. It comes to be thought desirable to have a general riddance of evil spirits at fixed times, usually once a year, in order that the people may make a fresh start in life, freed from all the malignant influences which have been long accumulating about them. Some of the Australian blacks annually expelled the ghosts of the dead from their territory. The ceremony was witnessed by the Rev. W. Ridley on the banks of the River Barwan. "A chorus of twenty, old and young, were singing and beating time with boomerangs. . . . Suddenly, from under a sheet of bark darted a man with his body whitened by pipeclay, his head and face coloured with lines of red and yellow, and a tuft of feathers fixed by means of a stick two feet above the crown of his head. He stood twenty minutes perfectly still, gazing upwards. An aboriginal who stood by told me he was looking for the ghosts of dead men. At last he began to move very slowly, and soon rushed to and fro at full speed, flourishing a branch as if to drive away some foes invisible to us. When I thought this pantomime must be almost over, ten more, similarly adorned, suddenly appeared from behind the trees, and the whole party joined in a brisk conflict with their mysterious assailants. . . . At last, after some rapid evolutions in which they put forth all their strength, they rested from the exciting toil which they had kept up all night and for some hours after sunrise; they seemed satisfied that the ghosts were driven away for twelve months. They were performing the same ceremony at every station along the river, and I am told it is an annual custom."¹

Certain seasons of the year mark themselves naturally out as appropriate moments for a general expulsion of devils. Such a moment occurs towards the close of an Arctic winter, when the sun reappears on the horizon after an absence of weeks or months. Accordingly, at Point Barrow, the most northerly extremity of Alaska, and nearly of America, the

Kruijt, "Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschappelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendeling-*

genootschap, xxxix. (1895), p. 142 *sq.*

¹ The Rev. W. Ridley, in J. D. Lang's *Queensland*, p. 441; cp. Ridley, *Kamilaroi*, p. 149.

Esquimaux choose the moment of the sun's reappearance to hunt the mischievous spirit *Tuñā* from every house. The ceremony was witnessed some years ago by the members of the United States Polar Expedition, who wintered at Point Barrow. A fire was built in front of the council-house, and an old woman was posted at the entrance to every house. The men gathered round the council-fire, while the young women and girls drove the spirits out of every house with their knives, stabbing viciously under the bunk and deer-skins, and calling upon *Tuñā* to be gone. When they thought he had been driven out of every hole and corner, they thrust him down through the hole in the floor and chased him into the open air with loud cries and frantic gestures. Meanwhile the old woman at the entrance of the house made passes with a long knife in the air to keep him from returning. Each party drove the spirit towards the fire and invited him to go into it. All were by this time drawn up in a semicircle round the fire, when several of the leading men made specific charges against the spirit; and each after his speech brushed his clothes violently, calling on the spirit to leave him and go into the fire. Two men now stepped forward with rifles loaded with blank cartridges, while a third brought a vessel of urine and flung it on the flames. At the same time one of the men fired a shot into the fire; and as the cloud of steam rose it received the other shot, which was supposed to finish *Tuñā* for the time being.¹ In late autumn, when storms rage over the land and break the icy fetters by which the frozen sea is as yet but slightly bound, when the loosened floes are driven against each other and break with loud crashes, and when the cakes of ice are piled in wild disorder one upon another, the Esquimaux of Baffin Land fancy they hear the voices of the spirits who people the mischief-laden air. Then the spirits of the dead knock wildly at the huts, which they cannot enter, and woe to the hapless wight whom they catch; he soon sickens and dies. Then the phantom of a huge hairless dog pursues the real dogs, which expire in convulsions and cramps at sight of him. All the countless spirits of evil are abroad, striving

¹ *Report of the International Polar Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska* (Washington, 1885), p. 42 sq.

to bring sickness and death, foul weather and failure in hunting on the Esquimaux. Most dreaded of all these spectral visitants are Sedna, mistress of the nether world, and her father, to whose share dead Esquimaux fall. While the other spirits fill the air and the water, she rises from under ground. It is then a busy season for the wizards. In every house you may hear them singing and praying, while they conjure the spirits, seated in a mystic gloom at the back of the hut, which is dimly lit by a lamp burning low. The hardest task of all is to drive away Sedna, and this is reserved for the most powerful enchanter. A rope is coiled on the floor of a large hut in such a way as to leave a small opening at the top, which represents the breathing hole of a seal. Two enchanters stand beside it, one of them grasping a spear as if he were watching a seal-hole in winter; the other holding the harpoon-line. A third sorcerer sits at the back of the hut chanting a magic song to lure Sedna to the spot. Now she is heard approaching under the floor of the hut, breathing heavily; now she emerges at the hole; now she is harpooned and sinks away in angry haste, dragging the harpoon with her, while the two men hold on to the line with all their might. The struggle is severe, but at last by a desperate wrench she tears herself away and returns to her dwelling in Adlivun. When the harpoon is drawn up out of the hole it is found to be splashed with blood, which the enchanters proudly exhibit as a proof of their prowess. Thus Sedna and the other evil spirits are at last driven away, and next day a great festival is celebrated by old and young in honour of the event. But they must still be cautious, for the wounded Sedna is furious and will seize any one she may find outside of his hut; so they all wear amulets on the top of their hoods to protect themselves against her. These amulets consist of pieces of the first garments that they wore after birth.¹

The Iroquois inaugurated the new year in January, February, or March (the time varied) with a "festival of dreams" like that which the Hurons observed on special

¹ Fr. Boas, "The Eskimo," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* for 1887, vol. v. (Montreal, 1888), sect. ii. 36 sq.; *id.*, "The

Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 603 sq.

occasions.¹ The whole ceremonies lasted several days, or even weeks, and formed a kind of saturnalia. Men and women, variously disguised, went from wigwam to wigwam smashing and throwing down whatever they came across. It was a time of general licence; the people were supposed to be out of their senses, and therefore not to be responsible for what they did. Accordingly, many seized the opportunity of paying off old scores by belabouring obnoxious persons, drenching them with ice-cold water, and covering them with filth or hot ashes. Others seized burning brands or coals and flung them at the heads of the first persons they met. The only way of escaping from these persecutors was to guess what they had dreamed of. On one day of the festival the ceremony of driving away evil spirits from the village took place. Men clothed in the skins of wild beasts, their faces covered with hideous masks, and their hands with the shell of the tortoise, went from hut to hut making frightful noises; in every hut they took the fuel from the fire and scattered the embers and ashes about the floor with their hands. The general confession of sins which preceded the festival was probably a preparation for the public expulsion of evil influences; it was a way of stripping the people of their moral burdens, that these might be collected and cast out. This New Year festival is still celebrated by some of the heathen Iroquois, though it has been shorn of its former turbulence. A conspicuous feature in the ceremony is now the sacrifice of the White Dog, but this appears to have been added to the festival in comparatively modern times, and does not figure in the oldest descriptions of the ceremonies. We shall return to it later on.² A great annual festival of

¹ Above, p. 68 *sq.*

² Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, vi. 82 *sqq.*; Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York*, iv. 201 *sq.*; L. H. Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, p. 207 *sqq.*; Mrs. E. A. Smith, "Myths of the Iroquois," *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1883), p. 112 *sqq.*; Horatio Hale, "Iroquois sacrifice of the White Dog," *American Antiquarian*, vii. 7 *sqq.*;

W. M. Beauchamp, "Iroquois White Dog feast," *ibid.* p. 235 *sqq.* "They had one day in the year which might be called the Festival of Fools; for in fact they pretended to be mad, rushing from hut to hut, so that if they ill-treated any one or carried off anything, they would say next day, 'I was mad; I had not my senses about me.' And the others would accept this explanation and exact no vengeance" (L. Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane*, Paris, 1683, p. 71 *sq.*).

the Cherokee Indians was the Propitiation, "Cementation," or Purification festival. "It was celebrated shortly after the first new moon of autumn, and consisted of a multiplicity of rigorous rites, fastings, ablutions, and purifications. Among the most important functionaries on the occasion were seven exorcisers or cleansers, whose duty it was, at a certain stage of the proceedings to drive away evil, and purify the town. Each one bore in his hand a white rod of sycamore. 'The leader, followed by others, walked around the national heptagon, and coming to the treasure or store-house to the west of it, they lashed the eaves of the roofs with their rods. The leader then went to another house, followed by the others, singing, and repeated the same ceremony until every house was purified.' This ceremony was repeated daily during the continuance of the festival. In performing their ablutions they went into the water and allowed their old clothes to be carried away by the stream, by which means they supposed their impurities removed."¹

In September the Incas of Peru celebrated a festival called Situa, the object of which was to banish from the capital and its vicinity all disease and trouble. The festival fell in September because the rains begin about this time, and with the first rains there was generally much sickness. As a preparation for the festival the people fasted on the first day of the moon after the autumnal equinox. Having fasted during the day, and the night being come, they baked a coarse paste of maize. This paste was made of two sorts. One was kneaded with the blood of children aged five to ten years, the blood being obtained by bleeding the children between the eyebrows. These two kinds of paste were baked separately, because they were for different uses. Each family assembled at the house of the eldest brother to celebrate the feast; and those who had no elder brother went to the house of their next relation of greater age. On the same night all who had fasted during the day washed their bodies, and taking a little of the blood-kneaded paste, rubbed it over their head, face, breast, shoulders, arms, and legs. They did this in order that the paste might take away

¹ Squier's notes upon Bartram's from the MS. of Mr. Payne. See *Creek and Cherokee Indians*, p. 78, above, vol. ii. p. 329, note 1.

all their infirmities. After this the head of the family anointed the threshold with the same paste, and left it there as a token that the inmates of the house had performed their ablutions and cleansed their bodies. Meantime the High Priest performed the same ceremonies in the temple of the Sun. As soon as the Sun rose, all the people worshipped and besought him to drive all evils out of the city, and then they broke their fast with the paste that had been kneaded without blood. When they had paid their worship and broken their fast, which they did at a stated hour, in order that all might adore the Sun as one man, an Inca of the blood royal came forth from the fortress, as a messenger of the Sun, richly dressed, with his mantle girded round his body, and a lance in his hand. The lance was decked with feathers of many hues, extending from the blade to the socket, and fastened with rings of gold. He ran down the hill from the fortress brandishing his lance, till he reached the centre of the great square, where stood the golden urn, like a fountain, that was used for the sacrifice of the fermented juice of the maize. Here four other Incas of the blood royal awaited him, each with a lance in his hand, and his mantle girded up to run. The messenger touched their four lances with his lance, and told them that the Sun bade them, as his messengers, drive the evils out of the city. The four Incas then separated and ran down the four royal roads which led out of the city to the four quarters of the world. While they ran, all the people, great and small, came to the doors of their houses, and with great shouts of joy and gladness shook their clothes, as if they were shaking off dust, while they cried, "Let the evils be gone. How greatly desired has this festival been by us. O Creator of all things, permit us to reach another year, that we may see another feast like this." After they had shaken their clothes, they passed their hands over their heads, faces, arms, and legs, as if in the act of washing. All this was done to drive the evils out of their houses, that the messengers of the Sun might banish them from the city; and it was done not only in the streets through which the Incas ran, but generally in all quarters of the city. Moreover, they all danced, the Inca himself amongst them, and bathed in the rivers and

fountains, saying that their maladies would come out of them. Then they took great torches of straw, bound round with cords. These they lighted, and passed from one to the other, striking each other with them, and saying, "Let all harm go away." Meanwhile the runners ran with their lances for a quarter of a league outside the city, where they found four other Incas ready, who received the lances from their hands and ran with them. Thus the lances were carried by relays of runners for a distance of five or six leagues, at the end of which the runners washed themselves and their weapons in rivers, and set up the lances, in sign of a boundary within which the banished evils might not return.¹

The negroes of Guinea annually banish the devil from all their towns with much ceremony. At Axim, on the Gold Coast, this annual expulsion is preceded by a feast of eight days, during which mirth and jollity reign, and "a perfect lampooning liberty is allowed, and scandal so highly exalted, that they may freely sing of all the faults, villanies, and frauds of their superiors as well as inferiors, without punishment, or so much as the least interruption." On the eighth day they hunt out the devil with a dismal cry, running after him and pelting him with sticks, stones, and whatever comes to hand. When they have driven him far enough out of the town, they all return. In this way he is expelled from more than a hundred towns at the same time. To make sure that he does not return to their houses, the women wash and scour all their wooden and earthen vessels, "to free them from all uncleanness and the devil."² The ceremony as it

¹ Garcilasso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Yucas*, pt. i. bk. vii. ch. 6, vol. ii. p. 228 sqq.; Markham's translation; Molina, "Fables and Rites of the Yucas," in *Rites and Laws of the Yucas* (Hakluyt Society, 1873), p. 29 sqq.; Acosta, *History of the Indies*, bk. v. ch. 28, vol. ii. p. 375 sq. (Hakluyt Society, 1880). The accounts of Garcilasso and Molina are somewhat discrepant, but this may be explained by the statement of the latter that "in one year they added, and in another they reduced the number of ceremonies, according to circum-

stances." Molina places the festival in August, Garcilasso and Acosta in September. According to Garcilasso there were only four runners in Cuzco; according to Molina there were four hundred. Acosta's account is very brief. In the description given in the text features have been borrowed from all three accounts, where these seemed consistent with each other.

² Hostman's "Guinea," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 402. Cp. Pierre Bouché, *La Côte des Esclaves*, p. 395.

is practised at Gatto, in Benin, has been described by an English traveller. He says: "It was about this time that I witnessed a strange ceremony, peculiar to this people, called the time of the 'grand devils.' Eight men were dressed in a most curious manner, having a dress made of bamboo about their bodies, and a cap on the head, of various colours and ornamented with red feathers taken from the parrot's tail; round the legs were twisted strings of shells, which made a clattering noise as they walked, and the face and hands of each individual were covered with a net. These strange beings go about the town, by day and by night, for the term of one month, uttering the most discordant and frightful noises; no one durst venture out at night for fear of being killed or seriously maltreated by these fellows, who are then especially engaged in driving the evil spirits from the town. They go round to all the chief's houses, and in addition to the noise they make, perform some extraordinary feats in tumbling and gymnastics, for which they receive a few cowries."¹ At Onitsha, on the Niger, Mr. J. C. Taylor witnessed the celebration of New Year's Day by the negroes. It fell on the twentieth of December 1858. Every family brought a firebrand out into the street, threw it away, and exclaimed as they returned, "The gods of the new year! New Year has come round again." Mr. Taylor adds, "The meaning of the custom seems to be that the fire is to drive away the old year with its sorrows and evils, and to embrace the new year with hearty reception."² Of all Abyssinian festivals that of Mascal or the Cross is celebrated with the greatest pomp. The eve of the festival witnesses a ceremony which doubtless belongs to the world-wide class of customs we are dealing with. At sunset a discharge of firearms takes place from all the principal houses. "Then every one provides himself with a torch, and during the early part of the night bonfires are kindled, and the people parade the town, carrying their lighted torches in their hands. They go through their houses too, poking a light into every dark

¹ *Narrative of Captain James Fawcner's Travels on the Coast of Benin, West Africa* (London, 1837), p. 102 sq.

² S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*, p. 320.

corner in the hall, under the couches, in the stables, kitchen, etc., as if looking for something lost, and calling out, 'Akho, akhoky! turn out the spinage, and bring in the porridge; Mascas is come!' . . . After this they play, and poke fun and torehes at each other."¹

Sometimes the date of the annual expulsion of devils is fixed with reference to the agricultural seasons. Among the Hos of North-Eastern India the great festival of the year is the harvest home, held in January, when the granaries are full of grain, and the people, to use their own expression, are full of devilry. "They have a strange notion that at this period men and women are so overcharged with vicious propensities, that it is absolutely necessary for the safety of the person to let off steam by allowing for a time full vent to the passions." The ceremonies open with a sacrifice to the village god of three fowls, two of which must be black. Along with them are offered flowers of the Palas-tree, bread made from rice-flour, and sesamum seeds. These offerings are presented by the village priest, who prays that during the year about to begin they and their children may be preserved from all misfortune and sickness, and that they may have seasonable rain and good crops. Prayer is also made in some places for the souls of the dead. At this time an evil spirit is supposed to infest the place, and to get rid of it men, women, and children go in procession round and through every part of the village with stieks in their hands, as if beating for game, singing a wild chant, and shouting vociferously, till they feel assured that the evil spirit must have fled. Then they give themselves up to feasting and drinking rice-beer, till they are in a fit state for the wild debauch which follows. The festival now "becomes a saturnale, during which servants forget their duty to their masters, children their reverence for parents, men their respect for women, and women all notions of modesty, delicacy, and gentleness; they become raging bacchantes." Usually the Hos are quiet and reserved in manner, decorous and gentle to women. But during this festival "their nature appears to undergo a temporary change. Sons and daughters revile their parents in gross language, and parents

¹ Mansfield Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia*, p. 285 sqq.

their children ; men and women become almost like animals in the indulgence of their amorous propensities." The Mundaris, kinsmen and neighbours of the Hos, keep the festival in much the same manner. "The resemblance to a Saturnale is very complete, as at this festival the farm labourers are feasted by their masters, and allowed the utmost freedom of speech in addressing them. It is the festival of the harvest home ; the termination of one year's toil, and a slight respite from it before they commence again."¹

Amongst some of the Hindoo Koosh tribes, as among the Hos and Mundaris, the expulsion of devils takes place after harvest. When the last crop of autumn has been got in, it is thought necessary to drive away evil spirits from the granaries. A kind of porridge called *mool* is eaten, and the head of the family takes his matchlock and fires it into the floor. Then, going outside, he sets to work loading and firing till his powder-horn is exhausted, while all his neighbours are similarly employed. The next day is spent in rejoicings. In Chitral this festival is called "devil-driving."² On the other hand the Khonds of India expel the devils at seed-time instead of at harvest. At this time they worship Pitteri Pennu, the god of increase and of gain in every shape. On the first day of the festival a rude car is made of a basket set upon a few sticks, tied upon bamboo rollers for wheels. The priest takes this car first to the house of the lincal head of the tribe, to whom precedence is given in all ceremonies connected with agriculture. Here he receives a little of each kind of seed and some feathers. He then takes the car to all the other houses in the village, each of which contributes the same things. Lastly, the car is conducted to a field without the village, attended by all the young men, who beat each other and strike the air violently with long sticks. The seed thus carried out is called the share of the "evil spirits, spoilers of the seed." "These are considered to be driven out with the car ; and when it and its contents

¹ Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 196 *sq.* We have seen (vol. ii. p. 326 *sqq.*) that among the Pondos of South Africa the harvest festival of first-fruits

is in like manner a period of licence and debauchery.

² Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*, p. 103.

are abandoned to them, they are held to have no excuse for interfering with the rest of the seed-corn." Next day each household kills a hog over the seed for the year, and prays to Pitteri Pennu. The elders then feast upon the hogs. The young men are excluded from the repast, but enjoy the privilege of waylaying and pelting with jungle-fruit their elders as they return from the feast. Upon the third day the lineal head of the tribe goes out and sows his seed, after which all the rest may do so.¹

The people of Bali, an island to the east of Java, have periodical expulsions of devils upon a great scale. Generally the time chosen for the expulsion is the day of the "dark moon" in the ninth month. When the demons have been long unmolested the country is said to be "warm," and the priest issues orders to expel them by force, lest the whole of Bali should be rendered uninhabitable. On the day appointed the people of the village or district assemble at the principal temple. Here at a cross-road offerings are set out for the devils. After prayers have been recited by the priests, the blast of a horn summons the devils to partake of the meal which has been prepared for them. At the same time a number of men step forward and light their torches at the holy lamp which burns before the chief priest. Immediately afterwards, followed by the bystanders, they spread in all directions and march through the streets and lanes crying, "Depart! go away!" Wherever they pass, the people who have stayed at home hasten, by a deafening knocking on doors, beams, rice-blocks, and so on, to take their share in the expulsion of devils. Thus chased from the houses, the fiends flee to the banquet which has been set out for them; but here the priest receives them with curses which finally drive them from the district. When the last devil has taken his departure, the uproar is succeeded by a dead silence, which lasts during the next day also. The

¹ W. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India*, p. 357 sq. Possibly this case belongs more strictly to the class of mediæ expulsions, the devils being driven out upon the car. Perhaps, however, the car with its contents is regarded rather as a bribe to induce

them to go than as a vehicle in which they are actually carted away. Anyhow it is convenient to take this case along with those other expulsions of demons which are the accompaniment of an agricultural festival.

devils, it is thought, are anxious to return to their old homes, and in order to make them think that Bali is not Bali but some desert island, no one may stir from his own abode for twenty-four hours. Even ordinary household work, including cooking, is discontinued. Only the watchmen may show themselves in the streets. Wreaths of thorns and leaves are hung at all the entrances to warn strangers from entering. Not till the third day is this state of siege raised, and even then it is forbidden to work at the rice-fields or to buy and sell in the market. Most people still stay at home, striving to while away the time with cards and dice.¹

The Shans of Southern China annually expel the fire-spirit. The ceremony was witnessed by the English Mission under Colonel Sladen on the thirteenth of August 1868. Bullocks and cows were slaughtered in the market-place; the meat was all sold, part of it was cooked and eaten, while the rest was fired out of guns at sundown. The pieces of flesh which fell on the land were supposed to become mosquitoes, those which fell in the water were believed to turn into leeches. In the evening the chief's retainers beat gongs and blew trumpets; and when darkness had set in torches were lit, and a party, preceded by the musicians, searched the central court for the fire-spirit, who is supposed to lurk about at this season with evil intent. They then ransacked all the rooms and the gardens, throwing the light of the torches into every nook and corner where the evil spirit might find a hiding-place.² In some parts of Fiji an annual ceremony took place which has much the aspect of an expulsion of devils. The time of its celebration was determined by the appearance of a certain fish or sea-slug (*balolo*) which swarms out in dense shoals from the coral reefs on a single day of the

¹ R. van Eck, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, N.S., viii. (1879), pp. 58-60. Van Eck's account is reprinted in J. Jacobs's *Eenigen tijd onder de Baliers* (Batavia, 1883), p. 190 sqq. According to another writer, each village may choose its own day for expelling the devils, but the ceremony must always be performed at the new moon. A necessary preliminary is to

mark exactly the boundaries of the village territory, and this is done by stretching the leaves of a certain palm across the roads at the boundaries. See F. A. Liefrinck, "Bijdrage tot de kennis van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890), p. 246 sq.

² J. Anderson, *Mandalay to Mottien* (London, 1876), p. 308.

year, usually in the last quarter of the moon in November. The appearance of the sea-slugs was the signal for a general feast at those places where they were taken. An influential man ascended the tree and prayed to the spirit of the sky for good crops, fair winds, and so on. Thereupon a tremendous clatter, with drumming and shouting, was raised by all the people in their houses for about half an hour. This was followed by a dead quiet for four days, during which the people feasted on the sea-slug. All this time no work of any kind might be done, not even a leaf plucked nor the offal removed from the houses. If a noise was made in any house, as by a child crying, a forfeit was at once exacted by the chief. At daylight on the expiry of the fourth night the whole town was in an uproar; men and boys scampered about, knocking with clubs and sticks at the doors of the houses and crying "Sinariba." This concluded the ceremony.¹

On the last night of the year there is observed in most Japanese houses a ceremony called "the exorcism of the evil spirit." It is performed by the head of the family. Clad in his finest robes, with a sword, if he has the right of bearing one, at his waist, he goes through all the rooms at the hour of midnight, carrying in his left hand a box of roasted beans on a lacquered stand. From time to time he dips his right hand into the box and scatters a handful of beans on a mat, pronouncing a cabalistic form of words of which the meaning is, "Go forth, demons! Enter riches!"² According to another account, the ceremony takes place on the night before the beginning of spring, and the roasted beans are flung against the walls as well as on the floors of the houses.³ On the third day of the tenth month in every year the Hak-Ka, a native race in the province of Canton, sweep their houses and turn the accumulated filth out of doors, together with three sticks of incense and some mock money made of

¹ *U.S. Exploring Expedition, Ethnography and Philology*, by H. Hale, p. 67 sq.; Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the U.S. Exploring Expedition*, iii. 90 sq. According to the latter, the sea-slug was eaten by the men alone, who lived during the four days in the temple,

while the women and boys remained shut up in their houses.

² A. Humbert, *Le Japon illustré* (Paris, 1870), ii. 326.

³ Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, v. 367.

paper. At the same time they call out, "Let the devil of poverty depart! Let the devil of poverty depart!" By performing this ceremony they hope to preserve their homes from penury.¹ Among some of the Hindoos of the Punjab on the morning after Diwali or the festival of lamps, at which the souls of ancestors are believed to visit the house, the oldest woman of the family takes a corn-sieve or winnowing basket and a broom, to both of which magical virtues are ascribed, and beats them in every corner of the house, exclaiming, "God abide and poverty depart!" The sieve is then carried out of the village, generally to the east or north, and being thrown away is supposed to bear away with it the poverty and distress of the household. Or the woman flings all the sweepings and rubbish out of doors, saying, "Let all dirt and wretchedness depart from here, and all good fortune come in."² The Persians used annually to expel the demons or goblins (*Dives*) from their houses in the month of December. For this purpose the Magi wrote certain words with saffron on a piece of parchment or paper and then held the writing over a fire into which they threw cotton, garlic, grapes, wild rue, and the horn of an animal that had been killed on the sixteenth of September. The spell thus prepared was nailed or glued to the inside of the door, and the door was painted red. Next the priest took some sand and spread it out with a knife, while he muttered certain prayers. After that he strewed the sand on the floor, and the enchantment was complete. The demons now immediately vanished, or at least were deprived of all their malignant power.³

In Tonquin a *theekydaw* or general expulsion of malevolent spirits commonly took place once a year, especially if there was a great mortality amongst men or cattle, "the cause of which they attribute to the malicious spirits of such men as have been put to death for treason, rebellion, and conspiring the death of the king, general, or princes, and that in revenge of the punishment they have suffered, they are bent to

¹ Eitel, "Les Hak-ka," *L'Anthropologie*, iv. (1893), p. 175 sq.

² *Punjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 146 sq., § 792; D. C. J. Ibbetson, *Outlines of Punjab Ethnography*, p. 119; W. Crooke, *Introduction to the*

Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India, p. 307.

³ John Richardson, *Dictionary of Persian, Arabic, and English*, New Edition (London, 1829), p. liii.

destroy everything and commit horrible violence. To prevent which their superstition has suggested to them the institution of this theekydaw as a proper means to drive the devil away, and purge the country of evil spirits." The day appointed for the ceremony was generally the twenty-fifth of February, one month after the beginning of the new year, which fell on the twenty-fifth of January. The intermediate month was a season of feasting, merry-making of all kinds, and general licence. During the whole month the great seal was kept shut up in a box, face downwards, and the law was, as it were, laid asleep. All courts of justice were closed; debtors could not be seized; small crimes, such as petty larceny, fighting, and assault, escaped with impunity; only treason and murder were taken account of and the malefactors detained till the great seal should come into operation again. At the close of the saturnalia the wicked spirits were driven away. Great masses of troops and artillery having been drawn up with flying colours and all the pomp of war, "the general beginneth then to offer meat offerings to the criminal devils and malevolent spirits (for it is usual and customary likewise amongst them to feast the condemned before their execution), inviting them to eat and drink, when presently he accuses them in a strange language, by characters and figures, etc., of many offences and crimes committed by them, as to their having disquieted the land, killed his elephants and horses, etc., for all which they justly deserved to be chastised and banished the country. Whereupon three great guns are fired as the last signal; upon which all the artillery and muskets are discharged, that, by their most terrible noise the devils may be driven away; and they are so blind as to believe for certain, that they really and effectually put them to flight."¹

¹ Baron, "Description of the Kingdom of Tonqueen," *Pinkerton's Voyages and Travels*, ix. 673, 695 sq.; cp. Richard, "History of Tonquin," *ibid.* p. 746. The account of the ceremony by Tavernier (whom Baron criticises very unfavourably) is somewhat different. According to him, the expulsion of wicked souls at the New Year is combined with sacrifice to the honoured dead. "At the beginning of every

year they have a great solemnity in honour of the dead, who were in their lives renowned for their noble actions and valour, reckoning rebels among them. They set up several altars, some for sacrifices, others for the names of the persons they design to honour; and the king, princes, and mandarins are present at them, and make three profound reverences to the altars when the sacrifices are finished;

In Cambodia the expulsion of evil spirits took place in March. Bits of broken statues and stones, considered as the abode of the demons, were collected and brought to the capital. Here as many elephants were collected as could be got together. On the evening of the full moon volleys of musketry were fired and the elephants charged furiously to put the devils to flight.¹ In Siam the banishment of demons is annually carried into effect on the last day of the old year. A signal gun is fired from the palace; it is answered from the next station, and so on from station to station, till the firing has reached the outer gate of the city. Thus the demons are driven out step by step. As soon as this is done a consecrated rope is fastened round the circuit of the city walls to prevent the banished demons from returning. The rope is made of tough couch-grass and is painted in alternate stripes of red, yellow, and blue.² According to a more recent account, the Siamese ceremony takes place at the New Year holidays, which are three in number, beginning with the first of April. For the feasting which accompanies these holidays a special kind of cake is made, "which is as much in demand as our own Shrove-Tuesday pancakes or our Good-Friday hot cross-buns. The temples are thronged with women and children making offerings to Buddha and his priests. The people inaugurate their New Year with numerous charitable and religious deeds. The rich entertain the monks, who recite appropriate prayers and chants. Every departed soul returns to the bosom of his family during these three days, freed from any fetters that may have bound him in the regions of indefin-

but the king shoots five times against the altars where the rebel names are; then the great guns are let off, and the soldiers give volleys of small shot, to put the souls to flight. The altars and papers made use of at the sacrifices are burnt, and the bonzes and sages go to eat the meat made use of at the sacrifice" (Tavernier, in John Harris's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. i. (London, 1744), p. 823).

¹ Aymonier, *Notice sur le Cambodge*, p. 62.

² Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen*

Asien, iii. 237, 298, 314, 529 sq.; Pallegoix, *Royaume Thai ou Siam*, i. 252. Bastian (p. 314), with whom Pallegoix seems to agree, distinctly states that the expulsion takes place on the last day of the year. Yet both state that it occurs in the fourth month of the year. According to Pallegoix (i. 253) the Siamese year is composed of twelve lunar months, and the first month usually begins in December. Hence the expulsion of devils would commonly take place in March, as in Cambodia.

able locality. On the third day the religious observances terminate, and the remaining hours are devoted to 'the world, the flesh, and the devil.' Gambling is not confined to the licensed houses, but may be indulged in anywhere. Games of chance hold powerful sway in every house as long as the licence to participate in them lasts. Priests in small companies occupy posts at regular intervals round the city wall, and spend their time in chanting away the evil spirits. On the evening of the second day, the ghostly visitors from the lower realms lose the luxury of being exorcised with psalms. Every person who has a gun may fire it as often as he pleases, and the noise thus made is undoubtedly fearful enough in its intensity to cause any wandering traveller from the far-off fiery land to retrace his steps with speed. The bang and rattle of pistols, muskets, shot-guns, and rifles cease not till the break of day, by which time the city is effectually cleared of all its infernal visitors."¹ From this account we learn that among the spirits thus banished are the souls of the dead, who revisit their living friends once a year.

A similar belief and a similar custom prevail in Japan. There, too, the souls of the departed return to their old homes once a year, and a festival called the Feast of Lanterns is made to welcome them. They come at evening on the thirteenth day of the seventh month of the old calendar, which falls towards the end of August. It is needful to light them on their way. Accordingly bamboos with pretty coloured lanterns attached to them are fastened on the tombs, and being thickly set they make an illumination on the hills, where the burying-grounds are generally situated. Lamps of many hues or rows of tapers are also lit and set out in front of the houses and in the gardens, and small fires are kindled in the streets, so that the whole city is in a blaze of light. After the sun has set, a great multitude issues from the town, for every family goes forth to meet its returning dead. When they come to the spot where they believe the souls to be, they welcome the unseen visitors and invite them to rest after their journey, and to partake of refreshments, which they offer to them. Having allowed the souls time enough to satisfy their hunger and

¹ E. Young. *The Kingdom of the Yellow Kube*, p. 135 sq.

recover from their fatigue, they escort them by torchlight, chatting gaily with them, into the city and to the houses where they lived and died. These are also illuminated with brilliant lanterns; a banquet is spread on the tables; and the places of the dead, who are supposed to absorb the ethereal essence of the food, are laid for them as if they were alive. After the repast the living go from house to house to visit the souls of their dead friends and neighbours; and thus they spend the night running about the town. On the evening of the third day of the festival, which is the fifteenth day of the month, the time has come for the souls to return to their own place. Fires again blaze in the streets to light them on the road; the people again escort them ceremoniously to the spot where they met them two days before; and in some places they send the lanterns floating away on rivers or the sea in miniature boats, which are laden with provisions for the spirits on their way to their long home. But there is still a fear that some poor souls may have lagged behind, or even concealed themselves in a nook or corner, loth to part from the scenes of their former life and from those they love. Accordingly steps are taken to hunt out these laggards and send them packing after their fellow-ghosts. With this intention the people throw stones on the roofs of their houses in great profusion; and going through every room armed with sticks they deal swashing blows all about them in the empty air to chase away the lingering souls. This they do, we are told, out of a regard for their own comfort quite as much as from the affection they bear to the dead; for they fear to be disturbed by unseasonable apparitions if they suffered the airy visitors to remain in the house.¹

Thus in spite of the kindly welcome given to the souls, the fear which they inspire comes out plainly in the pains taken to ensure their departure; and this fear justifies us in including such forced departures among the ceremonies for the expulsion of evils with which we are here concerned.

¹ Charlevoix, *Histoire et description generale du Japon* (Paris, 1736), i. 128 sq.; C. P. Thunberg, *Voyages au Japon* (Paris, 1796), iv. 18-20; Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, v.

364; Beaufort, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv. (1886), p. 102; A. Morgan, in *Journal of American Folk-lore*, x. (1897), p. 244 sq.

It may be remembered that the annual banishment of ghosts has been practised by savages so low in the scale of humanity as the Australian aborigines.¹ At the other end of the scale it was observed in classical antiquity by the civilised Greeks and Romans. The Athenians believed that at the festival of the Anthesteria the souls of the dead came back from the nether world and went about the city. Accordingly ropes were fastened round the temples to keep out the wandering ghosts; and with a like intention the people smeared the doors of their houses with pitch, apparently thinking that any rash spirits who might attempt to enter would stick fast in the pitch and be glued, like so many flies, to the door. But at the end of the festival the souls were bidden to depart in these words: "Out of the door with you, souls. The Anthesteria is over."² Yet for the entertainment of the unseen guests during their short stay earthenware pots full of boiled food appear to have been everywhere prepared throughout the city; but probably

¹ Above, p. 70.

² Hesychius, *s.v.* μαραι ἡμέραι τοῦ 'Ανθεστηριῶνος μηνός, ἐν αἷς τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν κατοικομένων ἀνίσταται ἐξόκτον. Photius, *Lexicon*, *s.v.* Θύραζε Κῆρες οὐκέτ' 'Ανθεστήρια . . . τινὲς δὲ οὕτως τὴν παροιμίαν φασί: Θύραζε Κῆρες οὐκέτ' 'Ανθεστήρια: ὡς κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τοῖς 'Ανθεστηρίους τῶν ψυχῶν περιερχομένων. *Id.*, *s.v.* μαραι ἡμέραι: ἐν τοῖς Χουσίην 'Ανθεστηριῶνος μηνός, ἐν ᾧ δοκοῦσιν αἱ ψυχαὶ τῶν τελευτησάντων ἀνίσταται, ῥάμνῳ ἔωθεν ἑμασάντα καὶ πίττῃ τῆς θύρας ἔχρισαν. Pollux, viii. 141: περισχάνισαι τὰ ἑρὰ ἔλεγον ἐν ταῖς ἀποφράσι καὶ τὸ παραφράσαι. As to the closing of the temples, see further Athenaeus, x. 49, p. 447 C. At childbirth also the Greeks smeared pitch on their houses to keep out the demons (ἐκ ἀπέλασιν τῶν δαιμόνων) who attack women at such times (Photius, *Lexicon*, *s.v.* ῥάμνος). To this day the Bulgarians try to keep wandering ghosts from their houses by painting crosses with tar on the outside of their doors, white on the inside they hang a tangled skein composed of countless broken threads. The ghost cannot enter until he has counted all the threads, and before he has done

the sum the cock crows and the poor soul must return to the grave. See A. Strausz, *Die Bulgaren* (Leipsic, 1898), p. 454. As to the Anthesteria, see E. Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 216 sqq., who rightly adopts Hesychius's second explanation of Κῆρες. The reasons given by August Mommsen for rejecting that explanation betray an imperfect acquaintance with popular superstition (*Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, Leipsic, 1898, p. 386, note 1). The Thompson River Indians of British Columbia used to bar their houses against ghosts by means not unlike those adopted by the Athenians at the Anthesteria. When a death had happened, they hung a string of deer-hoofs across the inside of the house, and an old woman often pulled at the string to make the hoofs rattle. This kept the ghost out. They also placed branches of juniper at the door or burned them in the fire for the same purpose. See James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. ii. part iv. (April 1900), p. 332. Compare the old Prussian custom (vol. i. p. 351).

these were placed in the street outside the houses, in order to give the ghosts no excuse for entering and disturbing the inmates. No priest would eat of the food thus offered to the dead,¹ but prowling beggars probably had no such scruples. Similarly when the Sea Dyaks of Sarawak celebrate their great Festival of Departed Spirits at intervals which vary from one to three or four years, food is prepared for the dead and they are summoned from their far-off home to partake of it; but it is put outside at the entrance of the house. And before the general arrival of the souls, while the people are busy brewing the drink for the feast, each family takes care to hang an earthenware pot full of the liquor outside of the single room which it occupies in the large common house, lest some thirsty soul should arrive prematurely from the other world, and, forcing his way into the domestic circle, should not merely slake his thirst but carry off one of the living.² During three days in May the Romans held a festival in honour of the ghosts. The temples were shut, doubtless to keep out the ghostly swarms; but, as in Japan, every house seems to have been thrown open to receive the spirits of its own departed. When the reception was over, each head of a family arose at dead of night, washed his hands, and having made with fingers and thumb certain magic signs to ward off ghosts, he proceeded to throw black beans over his shoulder without looking behind him. As he did so, he said nine times, "With these beans I redeem me and mine"; and the ghosts, following unseen at his heels, picked up the beans and left him and his alone. Then he dipped his hands again in water, clashed bronze vessels together to make a din, and begged the ghosts to depart from his house, saying nine times, "Go forth, paternal shades!" After that he looked behind him, and the ceremony was over—the ghosts had taken their leave for another year.³

¹ Schol. on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 218.

² J. Perham, "Sea Dyak religion," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 14, December 1884, pp. 296-298.

³ Ovid, *Fasti*, v. 419-486; Varro,

quoted by Nonius Marcellus, p. 135 (p. 142 ed. Quicherat), s.v. "I. emures"; Festus, p. 87 ed. Müller, s.v. "Fabam." Ovid, who is our chief authority for the ceremony, speaks as if the festival lasted only one day (the ninth of May). But we know from the inscribed

Annual expulsions of demons, witches, or evil influences are not unknown in Europe at the present day. Amongst the heathen Wotyaks, a Finnish people of Eastern Russia, all the young girls of the village assemble on the last day of the year or on New Year's Day armed with sticks, the ends of which are split in nine places. With these they beat every corner of the house and yard, saying, "We are driving Satan out of the village." Afterwards the sticks are thrown into the river below the village, and as they float down stream Satan goes with them to the next village, from which he must be driven out in turn. In some villages the expulsion is managed otherwise. The unmarried men receive from every house in the village groats, flesh, and brandy. These they take to the fields, light a fire under a fir-tree, boil the groats, and eat of the food they have brought with them, after pronouncing the words, "Go away into the wilderness, come not into the house." Then they return to the village and enter every house where there are young women. They take hold of the young women and throw them into the snow, saying, "May the spirits of disease leave you." The remains of the groats and the other food are then distributed among all the houses in proportion to the amount that each contributed, and each family consumes its share. According to a Wotyak of the Malmyz district the young men throw into the snow whomever they find in the houses, and this is called "driving out Satan"; moreover some of the boiled groats are cast into the fire with the words, "O god, afflict us not with sickness and pestilence, give us not up as a prey to the spirits of the wood." But the most antique form of the ceremony is that observed by the Wotyaks of the Kasan Government. First of all a sacrifice is offered to the Devil at noon. Then all the men assemble on horseback in the centre of the village, and decide with which house they shall begin. When this question, which often gives rise to hot disputes, is settled, they tether their horses to the paling, and arm themselves with whips, clubs of lime-wood, and bundles of lighted twigs. The lighted twigs are believed to have the greatest terrors

calendars that it lasted three days. See *vals of the period of the Republic*, p. W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festi.* 106 sqq.

for Satan. Thus armed, they proceed with frightful cries to beat every corner of the house and yard, then shut the door, and spit at the ejected fiend. So they go from house to house, till the Devil has been driven from every one. Then they mount their horses and ride out of the village, yelling wildly and brandishing their clubs in every direction. Outside of the village they fling away the clubs and spit once more at the Devil.¹ The Cheremiss, another Finnish people of Eastern Russia, chase Satan from their dwellings by beating the walls with cudgels of lime-wood. When he has fled to the wood, they pelt the trees with some of the cheese-cakes and eggs which furnished the feast.²

In Albania on Easter Eve the young people light torches of resinous wood and march in procession, swinging them, through the village. At last they throw the torches into the river, crying, "Ha, Kore! we throw you into the river, like these torches, that you may never return."³ In some villages of Calabria the month of March is inaugurated with the expulsion of the witches. It takes place at night to the sound of the church bells, the people running about the streets and crying, "March is come." They say that the witches roam about in March, and the ceremony is repeated every Friday evening during the month.⁴ In the Tyrol the expulsion of witches takes place on the famous Walpurgis Night, which is the night of the first of May. On a Thursday at midnight bundles are made up of resinous splinters, black and red spotted hemlock, caper-spurge, rosemary, and twigs of the sloe. These are kept and burned on May Day by men who must first have received plenary absolution from the Church. On the last three days of April all the houses are cleansed and fumigated with juniper berries and rue. On May Day, when the evening bell has rung and the twilight is falling, the ceremony of "burning out the witches," as it is called, begins. Men and boys make a racket with whips, bells, pots, and pans; the women

¹ Max Buch, *Die Wotjaken*, p. 153 sq.

² Bastian, *Der Mensch in der Geschichte*, ii. 94.

³ J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische*

Studien, i. 160. Cp. above, vol. ii. p. 108.

⁴ Vincenzo Dorsa, *La tradizione greco-latina sugli usi e sulle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore*, p. 42 sq.

carry censers; the dogs are unchained and run barking and yelping about. As soon as the church-bells begin to ring, the bundles of twigs, fastened on poles, are set on fire and the incense is ignited. Then all the house-bells and dinner-bells are rung, pots and pans are clashed, dogs bark, every one must make a noise. And amid this hubbub all scream at the pitch of their voices,

"Witch flee, flee from here,
Or it will go ill with thee."

Then they run seven times round the houses, the yards, and the village. So the witches are smoked out of their lurking-places and driven away.¹ The custom of expelling the witches on Walpurgis Night is still, or used some thirty or forty years ago to be, observed in many parts of Bavaria and among the Germans of Bohemia. Thus in the Böhmerwald Mountains, which divide Bavaria from Bohemia, all the young fellows of the village assemble after sunset on some height, especially at a cross-road, and crack whips for a while in unison with all their strength. This drives away the witches; for so far as the sound of the whips is heard, these maleficent beings can do no harm. The peasants believe firmly in the efficacy of this remedy. A yokel will tell his sons to be sure to crack their whips loudly and hit the witches hard; and to give more sting to every blow the whip-lashes are knotted. On returning to the village the lads often sing songs and collect contributions of eggs, lard,

¹ Von Alpenburg, *Mythen und Sagen Tirols*, p. 260 sq. Compare J. E. Waldfreund, "Volksgebräuche und Aberglauben," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iii. (1855), p. 339. A Westphalian form of the expulsion of evil is the driving out the *Silntevögel*, *Sunnenvögel*, or *Sommervögel*, i.e. the batterfly. On St. Peter's Day, 22nd February, children go from house to house knocking on them with hammers and singing doggerel rhymes in which they bid the *Sommervögel* to depart. Presents are given to them at every house. Or the people of the house themselves go through all the rooms, knocking on all

the doors, to drive away the *Sunnenvögel*. If this ceremony is omitted, it is thought that various misfortunes will be the consequence. The house will swarm with rats, mice, and other vermin, the cattle will be sick, the butterflies will multiply at the milk-bowls, etc. See Woeste, *Volksüberlieferungen in der Grafschaft Mark*, p. 24; J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. 87; A. Kuhn, *Westfälische Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen*, ii. pp. 119-121, §§ 366-374; Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste, Volksbräuche*, etc., p. 21 sq.; Jahn, *Die deutschen Opfergebräuche bei Ackerbau und Viehzucht*, pp. 94-96.

bread, and butter. In some places, while the young fellows are cracking their whips the herdsmen wind their horns, whose long-drawn notes, heard far-off in the silence of night, are very effectual for banning the witches. In other places, again, the youth blow upon so-called shawms made of peeled willow-wood in front of every house, especially in front of such houses as are suspected of harbouring a witch.¹ At Brunnen, in Switzerland, the boys go about in procession on Twelfth Night, carrying torches and lanterns, and making a great noise with horns, cow-bells, whips, and so forth. This is said to frighten away the two female spirits of the wood, Strudeli and Strätteli.² In Labruguière, also, a canton of Southern France, the evil spirits are expelled at the same season. The canton lies in the picturesque and little known region of the Black Mountains, which form a sort of link between the Pyrenees and the Cevennes, and have preserved in their remote recesses certain types of life which have long disappeared elsewhere. On the eve of Twelfth Day the inhabitants rush through the streets jangling bells, clattering kettles, and doing everything to make a discordant noise. Then by the light of torches and blazing faggots they set up a prodigious hue and cry, an ear-splitting uproar, hoping thereby to chase all the wandering ghosts and devils from the town.³

§ 15. *Scapegoats*

Thus far we have dealt with that class of the general expulsion of evils which I have called direct or immediate. In this class the evils are invisible, at least to common eyes, and the mode of deliverance consists for the most part in beating the empty air and raising such a hubbub as may scare the mischievous spirits and put them to flight. It remains to illustrate the second class of expulsions, in which the evil influences are embodied in a visible form or are at least supposed to be loaded upon a material medium,

¹ *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, ii. 272, iii. 302 sq., 934; Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Das festliche Jahr*, p. 137.

² Usener, "Italische Mythen,"

Rheinisches Museum, N.F., xxx. (1875), p. 198.

³ A. de Nore, *Costumes, Mythes, et Traditions des Provinces de France*, pp. 81, 85.

which acts as a vehicle to draw them off from the people, village, or town.

The Pomos of California celebrate an expulsion of devils every seven years, at which the devils are represented by disguised men. "Twenty or thirty men array themselves in harlequin rig and barbaric paint, and put vessels of pitch on their heads; then they secretly go out into the surrounding mountains. These are to personify the devils. A herald goes up to the top of the assembly-house, and makes a speech to the multitude. At a signal agreed upon in the evening the masqueraders come in from the mountains, with the vessels of pitch flaming on their heads, and with all the frightful accessories of noise, motion, and costume which the savage mind can devise in representation of demons. The terrified women and children flee for life, the men huddle them inside a circle, and, on the principle of fighting the devil with fire, they swing blazing firebrands in the air, yell, whoop, and make frantic dashes at the marauding and bloodthirsty devils, so creating a terrific spectacle, and striking great fear into the hearts of the assembled hundreds of women, who are screaming and fainting and clinging to their valorous protectors. Finally the devils succeed in getting into the assembly-house, and the bravest of the men enter and hold a parley with them. As a conclusion of the whole farce, the men summon courage, the devils are expelled from the assembly-house, and with a prodigious row and racket of sham fighting are chased away into the mountains."¹ In spring, as soon as the willow-leaves were full grown on the banks of the river, the Mandan Indians celebrated their great annual festival, one of the features of which was the expulsion of the devil. A man, painted black to represent the devil, entered the village from the prairie, chased and frightened the women, and acted the part of a buffalo bull in the buffalo dance, the object of which was to ensure a plentiful supply of buffaloes during the ensuing year. Finally he was chased from the village, the women pursuing him with hisses and gibes, beating him with sticks, and pelting him with dirt.² Some

¹ S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, *Indians*, i. 166 sqq.; *id.*, *O-kec-pa, a Religious Ceremony, and other Customs* of the Mandans.

² G. Catlin, *North American* of the Mandans.

of the native tribes of Central Queensland believe in a noxious being called Molonga, who prowls unseen and would kill men and violate women if certain ceremonies were not performed. These ceremonies last for five nights and consist of dances, in which only men, fantastically painted and adorned, take part. On the fifth night Molonga himself, personified by a man tricked out with red ochre and feathers and carrying a long feather-tipped spear, rushes forth from the darkness at the spectators and makes as if he would run them through. Great is the excitement, loud are the shrieks and shouts, but after another feigned attack the demon vanishes in the gloom.¹ On the last night of the year the palace of the Kings of Cambodia is purged of devils. Men painted as fiends are ebased by elephants about the palace courts. When they have been expelled, a consecrated thread of cotton is stretched round the palace to keep them out.² The Kasyas, a hill tribe of Assam, annually expel the demons. The ceremony takes place in a fixed month of the year, and part of it consists in a struggle between two bands of men who stand on opposite sides of a stream, each side tugging at the end of a rope which is stretched across the water. In this contest, which resembles the game of "French and English" or "the Tug of War," the men on one side probably represent the demons.³ Some-

¹ W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines*, pp. 120-125.

² Moura, *Le Royaume du Cambodge*, i. 172. Cp. above, p. 85.

³ A. Bastian, in *Verhandl. d. Berl. Gesellsch. f. Anthropol.* 1881, p. 151; cp. *id.*, *Völkerstämme am Brahmaputra*, p. 6 sq. Amongst the Chukmas of South-East India the body of a priest is conveyed to the place of cremation on a car; ropes are attached to the car, the people divide themselves into two equal bodies and pull at the ropes in opposite directions. "One side represents the good spirits; the other, the powers of evil. The contest is so arranged that the former are victorious. Sometimes, however, the young men representing the demons are inclined to pull too vigorously, but a

stick generally quells this unseemly ardour in the cause of evil" (Lewin, *Wild Tribes of South-Eastern India*, p. 185). The contest is like that between the angels and devils depicted in the frescoes of the Campo Santo at Pisa. In Burma a similar contest takes place at the funeral of a holy man; but there the original meaning of the ceremony appears to be forgotten. See Sangermano, *Description of the Burmese Empire* (ed. 1885), p. 98; Forbes, *British Burma*, p. 216 sq.; Shway Yoe, *The Burman*, ii. 334 sq., 342. Sometimes ceremonies of this sort are instituted for a different purpose. Thus in Burma the contest is used as a rain-charm; "a rain party and a drough party tug against each other, the rain party being allowed the victory" (*Folk-lore Journal*, i. (1883) p. 214). In the Timor-laut Islands

times in an Esthonian village a rumour will get about that the Evil One himself has been seen in the place. Instantly the whole village is in an uproar, and the entire population, armed with sticks, flails, and scythes, turns out to give him chase. They generally expel him in the shape of a wolf or

when the people want a rainy wind from the west, the population of the village, men, women, and children, divide into two parties and pull against each other at the ends of a long bamboo. But the party at the eastern end must pull the harder, in order to draw the desired wind out of the west (Kiedel, *De slink en kroesharige rassen tusschen Sebes en Papua*, p. 282). According to another writer, while the contest only takes place in these islands when rain is wanted, it is closely connected with that ceremony for the fertilisation of the earth which has been already described (vol. ii. p. 205 sq.). The men and women appear to take opposite sides, and their motions are significant of the union of the sexes. See Van Hoëvell, "Leti-Eilanden," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkskunde*, xxxiii. (1890), p. 207. In Corea about the fifteenth day of the first month villages engage in the same kind of contest with each other, and it is thought that the village which wins will have a good harvest. Both men and women pull at the rope; the women load their skirts with stones to increase the strength of their pull. See A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man*, citing Stewart Culin, *Korean Games*, p. 35. The Roocooyen Indians of French Guiana play at the "Tug of War" as a sort of interlude during the ceremonial tortures of the youth. See H. Coudreau, *Chez nos Indiens: quatre années dans la Guyane Française* (Paris, 1895), p. 234. The Cingalese perform it as a ceremony in honour of the goddess Patiné (Forbes, *Eleven Years in Ceylon*, London, 1840, i. 358). We have seen that the Esquimaux practise it to procure good weather in winter (vol. ii. p. 103 sq.). In November, when the fishing season is over, the Kamchatkans used to divide into two parties, one of which tried to pull a

birch-tree by a strap through the smoke-hole into their subterranean winter dwelling, while the other party outside, pulling at the other end of the tree, endeavoured to hinder them. If the party in the house succeeded, they raised shouts of joy and set up a grass effigy of a wolf, which they preserved carefully throughout the year, believing that it espoused their young women and prevented them from giving birth to twins. See Stieler, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kantschatka*, p. 327. These instances make it probable that wherever the game is played only at certain definite seasons it was in its origin a magical ceremony intended to work some good to the community. Thus in the North-West Provinces of India it is played on the 14th of the light half of the month Kuār (Sir H. M. Elliot, *Memoirs on the history, etc., of the races of the North-Western Provinces of India*, i. 235); and at Ludlow in Shropshire, Presteign in Radnorshire, and Pontefract in Yorkshire it used to be played on Shrove Tuesday. See Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 92; Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, pp. 319-321. The custom has been discussed by Prof. A. C. Haddon, *Study of Man*, pp. 270-276. His view that the custom was intended to secure a good harvest appears not to cover all the cases. In Normandy at the Carnival desperate contests used to take place between neighbouring villages for the possession of a large leathern ball stuffed with bran and called the *soule*. It was thought that the victorious village would have a better crop of apples that year. See J. Leccour, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 153 sqq. Compare Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France*, i. 86 sqq.; and as to the game of *soule*, see Guerry, in *Mémoires des Antiquaires de France*, viii. (1829), pp. 459-61.

a cat, occasionally they brag that they have beaten the devil to death.¹ At Carmona, in Andalusia, on one day of the year, boys are stripped naked and smeared with glue in which feathers are stuck. Thus disguised, they run from house to house, the people trying to avoid them and to bar their houses against them.² The ceremony is probably a relic of an annual expulsion of devils.

Oftener, however, the expelled demons are not represented at all, but are understood to be present invisibly in the material and visible vehicle which conveys them away. Here, again, it will be convenient to distinguish between occasional and periodical expulsions. We begin with the former.

The vehicle which conveys away the demons may be of various kinds. A common one is a little ship or boat. Thus, in the southern district of the island of Ceram, when a whole village suffers from sickness, a small ship is made and filled with rice, tobacco, eggs, and so forth, which have been contributed by all the people. A little sail is hoisted on the ship. When all is ready, a man calls out in a very loud voice, "O all ye sicknesses, ye small-poxes, agues, measles, etc., who have visited us so long and wasted us so sorely, but who now cease to plague us, we have made ready this ship for you and we have furnished you with provender sufficient for the voyage. Ye shall have no lack of food nor of betel-leaves nor of areca nuts nor of tobacco. Depart, and sail away from us directly; never come near us again; but go to a land which is far from here. Let all the tides and winds waft you speedily thither, and so convey you thither that for the time to come we may live sound and well, and that we may never see the sun rise on you again." Then ten or twelve men carry the vessel to the shore, and let it drift away with the land-breeze, feeling convinced that they are free from sickness for ever, or at least till the next time. If sickness attacks them again, they are sure it is not the same sickness, but a different one, which in due time they dismiss in the same manner. When the demon-laden bark is lost to sight, the bearers return to the

¹ J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, ii. 278.

² *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889), p. 174.

village, whereupon a man cries out, "The sicknesses are now gone, vanished, expelled, and sailed away." At this all the people come running out of their houses, passing the word from one to the other with great joy, beating on gongs and on tinkling instruments.¹

Similar ceremonies are commonly resorted to in other East Indian islands. Thus in Timor-laut, to mislead the demons who are causing sickness, a small proa, containing the image of a man and provisioned for a long voyage, is allowed to drift away with wind and tide. As it is being launched, the people cry, "O sickness, go from here; turn back; what do you here in this poor land?" Three days after this ceremony a pig is killed, and part of the flesh is offered to Dudilaa, who lives in the sun. One of the oldest men says, "Old sir, I beseech you, make well the grandchildren, children, women, and men, that we may be able to eat pork and rice and to drink palm-wine. I will keep my promise. Eat your share, and make all the people in the village well." If the proa is stranded at any inhabited spot, the sickness will break out there. Hence a stranded proa excites much alarm amongst the coast population, and they immediately burn it, because demons fly from fire.² In the island of Buro the proa which carries away the demons of disease is about twenty feet long, rigged out with sails, oars, anchor, and so on, and well stocked with provisions. For a day and a night the people beat gongs and drums, and rush about to frighten the demons. Next morning ten stalwart young men strike the people with branches, which have been previously dipped in an earthen pot of water. As soon as they have done so, they run down to the beach, put the branches on board the proa, launch another boat in great haste, and tow the disease-burdened bark far out to sea. There they cast it off, and one of them calls out, "Grandfather Smallpox, go away—go willingly away—go visit another land; we have made you food ready for the voyage we have now nothing more to give." When they have

¹ François Valentyn, *Oud- en nieuw Ost-Indien*, iii. 14. Backer (*L'Archipel Indien*, p. 377 sq.) copies from Valentyn.

² Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 304 sq.

landed, all the people bathe together in the sea.¹ In this ceremony the reason for striking the people with the branches is clearly to rid them of the disease-demons, which are then supposed to be transferred to the branches. Hence the haste with which the branches are deposited in the proa and towed away to sea. So in the inland districts of Ceram, when small-pox or other sickness is raging, the priest strikes all the houses with consecrated branches, which are then thrown into the river, to be carried down to the sea;² exactly as amongst the Wotyaks of Russia the sticks which have been used for expelling the devils from the village are thrown into the river, that the current may sweep the baleful burden away. In Amboyna, for a similar purpose, the whole body of the patient is rubbed with a live white cock, which is then placed on a little proa and committed to the waves;³ and in the Babar archipelago the bark which is to carry away to sea the sickness of a whole village contains a bowl of ashes taken from every kitchen in the village, and another bowl into which all the sick people have spat.⁴ The plan of putting puppets in the boat to represent sick persons, in order to lure the demons after them, is not uncommon.⁵ In Selangor, one of the native states in the Malay Peninsula, the ship employed in the export of disease is, or used to be, a model of a special kind of Malay craft called a *lanchang*. This was a two-masted vessel with galleries fore and aft, armed with cannon, and used by Malay rajahs on the coast of Sumatra. So gallant a ship would be highly acceptable to the spirits, and to make it still more beautiful in their

¹ Riedel, *op. cit.* p. 25 sq.

² *Ibid.* p. 141.

³ *Ibid.* p. 78.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 357.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 266, 304 sq., 327, 357; H. Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo*, i. 284. For other examples of sending away plague-laden boats in this region, see Riedel, *op. cit.* pp. 181, 210; Van Eck, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, N.S., viii. (1879), p. 104; Bastian, *Indonesien*, i. 147; Hupe, "Korte verhandeling over de godsdienst, zeden, enz. der Dajakkers,"

Tijdschrift voor Nederlands Indië, 1846, dl. iii. 150; Campen, "De godsdienst-begrippen der Halmaherasche Alfoeren," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxvii. (1882), p. 441; *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 12, pp. 229-231; Van Hasselt, *Volksbeschrijving van Midden-Sumatra*, p. 98; C. M. Pleyte, "Ethnographische Beschrijving der Kei-Eilanden," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (1893), p. 835; H. Ling Roth, "Low's natives of Sarawak," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxii. (1893), p. 25.

eyes it was not uncommonly stained yellow with turmeric or saffron, for among the Malays yellow is the royal colour. Some years ago a very fine model of a *lanchang*, with its cargo of sickness, was towed down the river to sea by the Government steam launch. A common spell uttered at the launching of one of these ships runs as follows :—

“ Ho, elders of the upper reaches,
 Elders of the lower reaches,
 Elders of the dry land,
 Elders of the river-flats,
 Assemble ye, O people, lords of hill and hill-foot,
 Lords of cavern and hill-locked basin,
 Lords of the deep primeval forest,
 Lords of the river-bends,
 Come on board this *lanchang*, assembling in your multitudes.
 So may ye depart with the ebbing stream,
 Depart on the passing breeze,
 Depart in the yawning earth,
 Depart in the red-dyed earth.
 Go ye to the ocean which has no wave,
 And the plain where no green herb grows,
 And never return hither.
 But if ye return hither,
 Ye shall be consumed by the curse.
 At sea ye shall get no drink,
 Ashore ye shall get no food,
 But gape in vain about the world.”¹

The practice of sending away diseases in boats is known outside the limits of the Malay region. Thus when the people of Tikopia, a small island in the Pacific, to the north of the New Hebrides, were attacked by an epidemic cough, they made a little canoe and adorned it with flowers. Four sons of the principal chiefs carried it on their shoulders all round the island, accompanied by the whole population, some of whom beat the bushes, while others uttered loud cries. On returning to the spot from which they had set out, they launched the canoe on the sea.² In the Nicobar Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, when there is much sickness in a village or no fish are caught, the blame is laid upon the spirits. They must be propitiated with offerings. All relations and

¹ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, pp. 433-435.

² J. Dumont D'Urville, *Voyage autour*

du monde et à la recherche de La Pérouse, sur la corvette Astrolabe, v. 311.

friends are invited, a huge pig is roasted, and the best of it is eaten, but some parts are offered to the shades. The heap of offerings remains in front of the house till it is carried away by the rising tide. Then the priests, their faces reddened with paint and swine's blood, pretend to catch the demon of disease, and after a hand-to-hand tussle, force him into a model boat, made of leaves and decked with garlands, which is then towed so far to sea that neither wind nor tide is likely to drive it back to the shore.¹ In Annam, when the population of a village has been decimated by cholera, they make a raft and load it with offerings of money and food, such as a sucking pig, bananas, and oranges. Sticks of incense also smoke on the floating altar; and when all is ready and earnest prayers have been uttered, the raft is abandoned to the current of the river. The people hope that the demon of cholera, allured and gratified by these offerings, will float away on the raft and trouble them no more.²

Often the vehicle which carries away the collected demons or ills of a whole community is an animal or scapegoat. In the Central Provinces of India, when cholera breaks out in a village, every one retires after sunset to his house. The priests then parade the streets, taking from the roof of each house a straw, which is burnt with an offering of rice, ghee, and turmeric, at some shrine to the east of the village. Chickens daubed with vermilion are driven away in the direction of the smoke, and are believed to carry the disease with them. If they fail, goats are tried, and last of all pigs.³ When cholera is very bad among the Bhars, Mallans, and Kurmis of India, they take a goat or a buffalo—in either case the animal must be a female, and as black as possible—then having tied some grain, cloves, and red lead in a yellow cloth on its back they turn it out of the village. The animal is con-

¹ Roepstorff, "Ein Geisterboot der Nicobaresen," *Verhandl. der Berlin. Gesellsch. f. Anthropologie* (1881), p. 401; W. Svoboda, "Die Bewohner des Nikobaren-Archipels," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, vi. (1893), p. 10 sq.

² P. Denjoy, "Annam, Médecins et Sorciers, Remèdes et Superstitions,"

etc., *Bulletins de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, v. (1894), p. 409 sq. For Siamese applications of the same principle to the cure of individuals, see Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, iii. 295 sq., 485 sq.

³ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, i. p. 48, § 418.

ducted beyond the boundary and not allowed to return.¹ Sometimes the buffalo is marked with a red pigment and driven to the next village, where he carries the plague with him.² The people of the city and cantonments of Sagar being afflicted with a violent influenza, "I had an application from the old Queen Dowager of Sagar to allow of a noisy religious procession for the purpose of imploring deliverance from this great calamity. Men, women, and children in this procession were to do their utmost to add to the noise by 'raising their voices in psalmody,' beating upon their brass pots and pans with all their might, and discharging firearms where they could get them. Before the noisy crowd was to be driven a buffalo, which had been purchased by general subscription, in order that every family might participate in the merit. They were to follow it out eight miles, where it was to be turned loose for any man who would take it. If the animal returned, the disease must return with it, and the ceremony be performed over again. . . . It was, however, subsequently determined that the animal should be a goat; and he was driven before the crowd accordingly. I have on several occasions been requested to allow of such noisy ceremonies in cases of epidemics."³ Once, when influenza was raging in Pithuria, a man had a small carriage made, after a plan of his own, for a pair of scapegoats, which were harnessed to it and driven to a wood at some distance, where they were let loose. From that hour the disease entirely ceased in the town. The goats never returned; had they done so, "the disease must have come back with them."⁴ The idea of the scapegoat is not uncommon in the hills of the Eastern Ghats. In 1886, during a severe outbreak of small-pox, the people of Jeypur made *puja* to a goat, marched it to the Ghats, and let it loose on the plains.⁵ In Southern Konkan, on the appearance of cholera, the villagers went in procession from the temple to the extreme boundaries of the

¹ *Id.*, iii. p. 81, § 373.

² W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 91. Bulls are used as scapegoats for cholera in Cashmeer (H. G. M. Murray-Aynsley, in *Folk-lore*, iv. (1893), p. 398 sq.).

³ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 215 sq., § 1127.

⁴ *Id.*, ii. p. 215, § 1123.

⁵ F. Fawcett, "On the Saoras (or Savaras)," *Journal of the Anthropol. Soc. of Bombay*, i. 213, note.

village, carrying a basket of cooked rice covered with red powder, a wooden doll representing the pestilence, and a cock. The head of the cock was cut off at the village boundary, and the body was thrown away. When cholera had thus been transferred from one village to another, the second village observed the same ceremony and passed on the scourge to its neighbours, and so on through a number of villages.¹ Among the Korwas of Mirzapur, when cholera has broken out, the priest offers a black cock or, if the disease is very malignant, a black goat at the shrine of the local deity, and then drives the animal away in the direction of some other village. But it has not gone far before he overtakes it, kills it, and eats it; which he may do with perfect safety in virtue of his sacred office. Again, when cholera is raging among the Pataris, an aboriginal Dravidian race of South Mirzapur, the wizard and the village elders feed a black cock with grain and drive it beyond the boundaries, ordering the fowl to take the disease away with it. A little oil, red lead, and a spangle worn by a woman on her forehead are usually fastened to the bird's head before it is let loose. The cost of purchasing the cock is defrayed by public subscription. When such a bird of ill-omen appears in a village, the priest takes it to the shrine of the local deity and sacrifices it there; but sometimes he merely bows before it at the shrine and passes it on to some other village. If disease attacks their cattle, the Kharwars of Northern India take a black cock and put red lead on its head, antimony on its eyes, a spangle on its forehead, and a pewter bangle on its leg; thus arrayed they let it loose, calling out to the disease, "Mount on the fowl and go elsewhere into the ravines and thickets; destroy the sin." Perhaps, as has been suggested, this tricking out of the bird with women's ornaments may be a relic of some grosser form of expiation in which a human being was sacrificed or banished.² Charms of this sort in India no doubt date from a remote antiquity. They were known in the Vedic ages; for a ritual text describes the ceremony

¹ *Journ. Anthropol. Soc. Bombay*, i. 37.

² W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of*

Northern India, p. 109 sq.; *id.*, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, iii. 445.

of letting loose against a hostile army a white-footed ewe in which the power of disease was believed to be incarnate.¹ In 1857, when the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru were suffering from a plague, they loaded a black llama with the clothes of the plague-stricken people, sprinkled brandy on the clothes, and then turned the animal loose on the mountains, hoping that it would carry the pest away with it.²

Occasionally the scapegoat is a man. Some of the aboriginal tribes of China, as a protection against pestilence, select a man of great muscular strength to act the part of scapegoat. Having besmeared his face with paint, he performs many antics with the view of enticing all pestilential and noxious influences to attach themselves to him only. He is assisted by a priest. Finally the scapegoat, hotly pursued by men and women beating gongs and tom-toms, is driven with great haste out of the town or village.³ A Hindoo cure for the murrain is to hire a man of the Chamar caste, turn his face away from the village, brand him with a red-hot sickle, and let him go out into the jungle taking the murrain with him. He must not look back.⁴ In the territory of Kumaon, lying on the southern slopes of the Western Himalayas, the custom of employing a human scapegoat appears to have taken a somewhat peculiar form in the ceremony known as Barat. First of all a thick rope of grass is stretched from the top of a cliff to the valley beneath, where it is made fast to posts driven into the ground. Next a wooden saddle, with a very sharp ridge and unpadded, is attached by thongs to the cable, along which it runs in a deep groove. A man now seats himself on the saddle and is strapped to it, while sand-bags or heavy stones are suspended from his feet to secure his balance. Then, after various ceremonies have been performed and a kid sacrificed, he throws himself as far back in the saddle as he can go, and is started off to slide down the rope into the valley. Away he shoots at an ever-increasing speed; the saddle

¹ H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des* of the *Ethnological Society of London*,
Veda, p. 498. ii. 237.

² J. H. Gray, *China*, ii. 306.

³ D. Forbes, "On the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru," *Journal* § 598.
⁴ *Punjab Notes and Queries*, i. p. 75.

under him, however well greased, emits volumes of smoke during the greater part of his progress; and he is nearly senseless when he reaches the bottom. Here men are waiting to catch him and run forward with him some distance in order to break gradually the force of his descent. This ceremony, regarded as a propitiation of Mahadeva, is performed as a means of delivering a community from present or impending calamity. Thus, for example, it was performed when cholera was raging at Almora, and the people traced the immunity they enjoyed to the due observance of the rite. Each district has its hereditary Badi, as the performer is called; he is supported by annual contributions in grain from the inhabitants, as well as by special payments for each performance. When the ceremony is over, the grass rope is cut up and distributed among the villagers, who hang the pieces as charms at the eaves of their houses; and they preserve the hair of the Badi for a similar purpose. Yet while his severed locks bring fertility to other people's lands, he entails sterility on his own; and it is firmly believed that no seed sown by his hand could ever sprout. Formerly the rule prevailed that, if a Badi had the misfortune to fall from the rope in the course of his flying descent, he was immediately despatched with a sword by the spectators. The rule has naturally been abolished by the English government; but its former observance seems to indicate that the custom of letting a man slide down a rope as a charm to avert calamity is only a mitigation of an older custom of putting him to death.¹

The mediate expulsion of evils by means of a scapegoat or other material vehicle, like the immediate expulsion of them in invisible form, tends to become periodic, and for a like reason. Thus every year, generally in March, the people of Leti, Moa, and Lakor send away all their diseases to sea. They make a proa about six feet long, rig it with sails, oars, rudder, etc., and every family deposits in it some rice, fruit, a fowl, two eggs, insects that ravage the fields, and so on. Then they let it drift away to sea, saying, "Take away from here all kinds of sickness, take them to other islands, to other lands, distribute them in places that lie

¹ *North Indian Notes and Queries*, i. pp. 55, 74 *sq.*, 77, §§ 417, 499, 516.

eastward, where the sun rises."¹ The Biajas of Borneo annually send to sea a little bark laden with the sins and misfortunes of the people. The crew of any ship that falls in with the ill-omened bark at sea will suffer all the sorrows with which it is laden.² Every year, at the beginning of the dry season, the Nicobar islanders carry the model of a ship through their villages. The devils are chased out of the huts, and driven on board the little ship, which is then launched and suffered to sail away with the wind.³ At Sucla-Tirtha, in India, an earthen pot containing the accumulated sins of the people is (annually?) set adrift on the river. Legend says that the custom originated with a wicked priest who, after atoning for his guilt by a course of austerities and expiatory ceremonies, was directed to sail upon the river in a boat with white sails. If the white sails turned black, it would be a sign that his sins were forgiven him. They did so, and he joyfully allowed the boat to drift with his sins to sea.⁴ Amongst many of the aboriginal tribes of China, a great festival is celebrated in the third month of every year. It is held by way of a general rejoicing over what the people believe to be a total annihilation of the ills of the past twelve months. This annihilation is supposed to be effected in the following way. A large earthenware jar filled with gunpowder, stones, and bits of iron is buried in the earth. A train of gunpowder, communicating with the jar, is then laid; and a match being applied, the jar and its contents are blown up. The stones and bits of iron represent the ills and disasters of the past year, and the dispersion of them by the explosion is believed to remove the ills and disasters themselves. The festival is attended with much revelling and drunkenness.⁵ On New Year's Day people in Corea seek to rid themselves of all their distresses by painting images on paper, writing against them their troubles of body or mind, and afterwards giving the papers to a boy to burn. Another method of effecting the same object at the same season is to make rude dolls of

¹ Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 393.

² Bastian, *Der Mensch in der*

Geschichte, ii. 93.

³ *Id.*, ii. 91.

⁴ *Asiatic Researches*, ix. 96 sq.

⁵ J. H. Gray, *China*, ii. 306 sq.

straw, stuff them with a few copper coins, and throw them into the street. Whoever picks up such an effigy gets all the troubles and thereby relieves the original sufferer.¹ Mr. George Bogle, the English envoy sent to Tibet by Warren Hastings, witnessed the celebration of the Tibetan New Year's Day at Teshu Lumbo, the capital of the Teshu Lama. "The figure of a man, chalked upon paper, was laid upon the ground. Many strange ceremonies, which to me who did not understand them appeared whimsical, were performed about it; and a great fire being kindled in a corner of the court, it was at length held over it, and being formed of combustibles, vanished with much smoke and explosion. I was told it was a figure of the devil."² At Old Calabar, in Guinea, the devils are expelled once every two years. A number of figures called *nabikems* are made of sticks and bamboos, and fixed indiscriminately about the town. Some of them represent human beings, others birds, crocodiles, and so on. After three or four weeks the devils are expected to take up their abode in these figures. When the night comes for their general expulsion, the people feast and sally out in parties, beating at empty corners, and shouting with all their might. Shots are fired, the *nabikems* are torn up with violence, set in flames, and flung into the river. The orgies last till daybreak, and the town is considered to be rid of evil influences for two years to come.³ From another account of the same custom as it is practised at Creek Town, in Calabar, we learn that the images—large grotesque figures carved of wood—are set up in the houses, and that the spirits are believed to huddle among the rags and gew-gaws with which the effigies are bedizened. No sooner are these spirit-traps disposed of, by being hurled into the river, then fresh images are made and set up in the houses to be afterwards treated in the same fashion when the next general expulsion of spirits takes place.⁴ On the evening of Easter Sunday the gypsies of Southern Europe take a wooden vessel like a band-box, which rests cradle-wise on two cross pieces

¹ Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, ii. 56.

² Bogle and Manning, *Tibet*, edited by C. R. Markham, p. 106 sq.

³ T. J. Hutchinson, *Impressions of*

Western Africa, p. 162.

⁴ Miss Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 494 sq. Compare J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth*, p. 105 sqq.

of wood. In this they place herbs and simples, together with the dried carcass of a snake, or lizard, which every person present must first have touched with his fingers. The vessel is then wrapt in white and red wool, carried by the oldest man from tent to tent, and finally thrown into running water, not, however, before every member of the band has spat into it once, and the sorceress has uttered some spells over it. They believe that by performing this ceremony they dispel all the illnesses that would otherwise have afflicted them in the course of the year; and that if any one finds the vessel and opens it out of curiosity, he and his will be visited by all the maladies which the others have escaped.¹

On one day of the year some of the people of the Western Himalayas take a dog, intoxicate him with spirits and bhang or hemp, and having fed him with sweatmeats, lead him round the village and let him loose. They then chase and kill him with sticks and stones, and believe that, when they have done so, no disease or misfortune will visit the village during the year.² In some parts of Breadalbane it was formerly the custom on New Year's Day to take a dog to the door, give him a bit of bread, and drive him out, saying, "Get away, you dog! Whatever death of men or loss of cattle would happen in this house to the end of the present year, may it all light on your head!"³ It appears that the white dogs annually sacrificed by the Iroquois at their New Year Festival are, or have been, regarded as scapegoats. According to Mr. J. V. H. Clark, who witnessed the ceremony in January 1841, on the first day of the festival all the fires in the village were extinguished, the ashes scattered to the winds, and a new fire was kindled with flint and steel. On a subsequent day, men dressed in fantastic costumes went round the village, gathering the sins of the people. When the morning of the last day of the festival was come, two white dogs, decorated with red paint, wampum, feathers, and ribbons, were led out. They were soon

¹ H. von Wlislocki, *Volks Glaube und religiöser Brauch der Zigeuner*, p. 65 sq.

² E. T. Atkinson, "Notes on the History of Religion in the Himalaya of the North-West Provinces," *Journal of*

the Asiatic Society of Bengal, liii. pt. i. (1884), p. 62.

³ *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, from the MSS. of John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, edited by Alex. Allardyce (Edinburgh, 1888), ii. 439.

strangled, and hung on a ladder. Firing and yelling succeeded, and half an hour later the animals were taken into a house, "where the people's sins were transferred to them." The carcasses were afterwards burnt on a pyre of wood.¹ According to the Rev. Mr. Kirkland, who wrote last century, the ashes of the pyre upon which one of the white dogs was burnt were carried through the village and sprinkled at the door of every house.² Formerly, however, as we have seen, the Iroquois expulsion of evils was immediate and not by scapegoat.³ On the Day of Atonement, which was the tenth day of the seventh month, the Jewish high-priest laid both his hands on the head of a live goat, confessed over it all the iniquities of the Children of Israel, and, having thereby transferred the sins of the people to the beast, sent it away into the wilderness.⁴

The scapegoat upon whom the sins of the people are periodically laid, may also be a human being. At Onitsha, on the Niger, two human beings used to be annually sacrificed to take away the sins of the land. The victims were purchased by public subscription. All persons who, during the past year, had fallen into gross sins, such as incendiarism, theft, adultery, witchcraft, and so forth, were expected to contribute 28 *ngugas*, or a little over £2. The money thus collected was taken into the interior of the country and expended in the purchase of two sickly persons "to be offered as a sacrifice for all these abominable crimes—one for the land and one for the river." A man from a neighbouring

¹ W. M. Beauchamp, "The Iroquois White Dog Feast," *American Antiquarian*, vii. 237.

² *Ibid.* p. 236; T. Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York*, iv. 202.

³ Above, p. 72 *sq.*

⁴ Leviticus xvi. The word translated "scapegoat" in the Authorised Version is *Azazel*, which appears rather to be the name of a bad angel or demon, to whom the goat was sent away. There is some ground for thinking that the animal was killed by being thrown over a certain crag that overhangs a rocky chasm not far from Jerusalem. See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, ed. T. K.

Cheyne and J. S. Black, *s.v.* "Azazel." Modern Jews sacrifice a white cock on the eve of the Day of Atonement, nine days after the beginning of their New Year. The father of the family knocks the cock thrice against his own head, saying, "Let this cock be a substitute for me, let it take my place, let death be laid upon this cock, but a happy life bestowed on me and on all Israel." Then he cuts its throat and dashes the bird violently on the ground. The intestines are thrown on the roof of the house. The flesh of the cock was formerly given to the poor. See Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica*, ch. xxv. p. 508 *sqq.*

town was hired to put them to death. On the twenty-seventh of February 1858 the Rev. J. C. Taylor witnessed the sacrifice of one of these victims. The sufferer was a woman, about nineteen or twenty years of age. They dragged her alive along the ground, face downwards, from the king's house to the river, a distance of two miles, the crowds who accompanied her crying, "Wickedness! wickedness!" The intention was "to take away the iniquities of the land. The body was dragged along in a merciless manner, as if the weight of all their wickedness was thus carried away."¹ In Siam it used to be the custom on one day of the year to single out a woman broken down by debauchery, and carry her on a litter through all the streets to the music of drums and hautboys. The mob insulted her and pelted her with dirt; and after having carried her through the whole city, they threw her on a dunghill or a hedge of thorns outside the ramparts, forbidding her ever to enter the walls again. They believed that the woman thus drew upon herself all the malign influences of the air and of evil spirits.² The Battas of Sumatra offer either a red horse or a buffalo as a public sacrifice to purify the land and obtain the favour of the gods. Formerly, it is said, a man was bound to the same stake as the buffalo, and when they killed the animal, the man was driven away; no one might receive him, converse with him, or give him food.³ Doubtless he was supposed to carry away the sins and misfortunes of the people.

Human scapegoats, as we shall see presently, were well known in classical antiquity, and even in mediæval Europe the custom seems not to have been wholly extinct. In the town of Halberstadt, in Thuringen, there was a church said to have been founded by Charlemagne. In this church every year they chose a man, who was believed to be stained with heinous sins. On the first day of Lent he was brought to the church, dressed in mourning garb, with his head muffled

¹ S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*, pp. 343-345. Cp. J. F. Schön and S. Crowther, *Journals*, p. 48 sq. The account of the custom by J. Africanus B. Horton (*West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 185 sq.) is taken entirely

from Taylor.

² Turpin, "History of Siam," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, ix. 579.

³ Ködding, "Die Batakische Götter," *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*, xii. (1885), pp. 476, 478.

up. At the close of the service he was turned out of the church. During the forty days of Lent he perambulated the city barefoot, neither entering the churches nor speaking to any one. The canons took it in turn to feed him. After midnight he was allowed to sleep in the streets. On the day before Good Friday, after the consecration of the holy oil, he was readmitted to the church and absolved from his sins. The people gave him money. He was called Adam, and was now believed to be in a state of innocence.¹ At Entlebuch, in Switzerland, down to the close of last century, the custom of annually expelling a scapegoat was preserved in the ceremony of driving "Posterli" from the village into the lands of the neighbouring village. "Posterli" was represented by a lad disguised as an old witch or as a goat or an ass. Amid a deafening noise of horns, clarionets, bells, whips, and so forth, he was driven out. Sometimes "Posterli" was represented by a puppet, which was drawn on a sledge and left in a corner of the neighbouring village. The ceremony took place on the Thursday evening of the last week but one before Christmas.²

Sometimes the scapegoat is a divine animal. The people of Malabar share the Hindoo reverence for the cow, to kill and eat which "they esteem to be a crime as heinous as homicide or wilful murder." Nevertheless "the Bramans transfer the sins of the people into one or more Cows, which are then carry'd away, both the Cows and the Sins where-with these Beasts are charged, to what place the Braman shall appoint."³ When the ancient Egyptians sacrificed a bull, they invoked upon its head all the evils that might otherwise befall themselves and the land of Egypt, and thereupon they either sold the bull's head to the Greeks or cast it into the river.⁴ Now, it cannot be said that in the times known to us the Egyptians worshipped bulls in general, for they seem to have commonly killed and eaten them.⁵ But a good many circumstances point to the

¹ Aeneas Sylvius, *Opera* (Bâle, 1571), p. 423 sq.

² H. Usener, "Italische Mythen," *Rheinisches Museum*, N. F., xxx. (1875), p. 198.

³ J. Thomas Phillips, *Account of the*

Religion, Manners, and Learning of the People of Malabar, pp. 6, 12 sq.

⁴ Herodotus, ii. 39.

⁵ Herodotus, ii. 38-41; Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, iii. 403 sqq. (ed. 1878).

conclusion that originally all cattle, bulls as well as cows, were held sacred by the Egyptians. For not only were all cows esteemed holy by them and never sacrificed, but even bulls might not be sacrificed unless they had certain natural marks ; a priest examined every bull before it was sacrificed ; if it had the proper marks, he put his seal on the animal in token that it might be sacrificed ; and if a man sacrificed a bull which had not been sealed, he was put to death. Moreover, the worship of the black bulls Apis and Mnevis, especially the former, played an important part in Egyptian religion ; all bulls that died a natural death were carefully buried in the suburbs of the cities, and their bones were afterwards collected from all parts of Egypt and buried in a single spot ; and at the sacrifice of a bull in the great rites of Isis all the worshippers beat their breasts and mourned.¹ On the whole, then, we are perhaps entitled to infer that bulls were originally, as cows were always, esteemed sacred by the Egyptians, and that the slain bull upon whose head they laid the misfortunes of the people was once a divine scapegoat. It seems not improbable that the lamb annually slain by the Madis of Central Africa is a divine scapegoat, and the same supposition may partly explain the Zuni sacrifice of the turtle.²

Lastly, the scapegoat may be a divine man. Thus, in November the Gonds of India worship Ghansyam Deo, the protector of the crops, and at the festival the god himself is said to descend on the head of one of the worshippers, who is suddenly seized with a kind of fit and, after staggering about, rushes off into the jungle, where it is believed that, if left to himself, he would die mad. However, they bring him back, but he does not recover his senses for one or two days. The people think that one man is thus singled out as a scapegoat for the sins of the rest of the village.³ In the temple of the Moon the Albanians of the Eastern Caucasus kept a number of sacred slaves, of whom many were inspired and prophesied. When one of these men exhibited more than usual symptoms of inspiration or insanity, and wandered solitary up and down the woods, like the Gond in the jungle,

¹ Herodotus, *l.c.*

³ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, li. p.

² See vol. ii. pp. 371 *sqq.*, 439 *sq.* 34, § 335.

the high priest had him bound with a sacred chain and maintained him in luxury for a year. At the end of the year he was anointed with unguents and led forth to be sacrificed. A man whose business it was to slay these human victims and to whom practice had given dexterity, advanced from the crowd and thrust a sacred spear into the victim's side, piercing his heart. From the manner in which the slain man fell, omens were drawn as to the welfare of the commonwealth. Then the body was carried to a certain spot where all the people stood upon it as a purificatory ceremony.¹ This last circumstance clearly indicates that the sins of the people were transferred to the victim, just as the Jewish priest transferred the sins of the people to the scapegoat by laying his hand on the animal's head; and since the man was believed to be possessed by the divine spirit, we have here an undoubted example of a man-god slain to take away the sins and misfortunes of the people.

In Tibet the ceremony of the scapegoat presents some remarkable features. The Tibetan new year begins with the new moon, which appears about the fifteenth of February. For twenty-three days afterwards the government of Lhasa, the capital, is taken out of the hands of the ordinary rulers and entrusted to the monk of the Debang monastery who offers to pay the highest sum for the privilege. The successful bidder is called the Jalno, and he announces his accession to power in person, going through the streets of Lhasa with a silver stick in his hand. Monks from all the neighbouring monasteries and temples assemble to pay him homage. The Jalno exercises his authority in the most arbitrary manner for his own benefit, as all the fines which he exacts are his by purchase. The profit he makes is about ten times the amount of the purchase money. His

¹ Strabo, xi. 4. 7. For the custom of standing upon a sacrificed victim, compare Demosthenes, *Or.* xxiii. 68, p. 642; Pausanias, iii. 20. 9. With the practice of anointing the victim we may compare the treatment which Plato proposes in jest to accord to such poets as write clever but dangerous verses. He would worship bards of that sort as sacred, but would

anoint their heads with unguent, wreath them with wool, and send them away to some other city (*Republic*, iii. p. 398 A). Dio Chrysostom, who refers to this passage of Plato, tells us that what the philosopher proposed to do to the poets was what women did to swallows (*Or.* liii. vol. ii. p. 165, ed. Dindorf). Both these passages were pointed out to me by my friend Dr. Henry Jackson.

men go about the streets in order to discover any conduct on the part of the inhabitants that can be found fault with. Every house in Lhasa is taxed at this time, and the slightest fault is punished with unsparing rigour by fines. This severity of the Jalno drives all working classes out of the city till the twenty-three days are over. Meantime, all the priests flock from the neighbourhood into the city in such multitudes, that the streets are incarnadined with their red cloaks. All day long, from before the peep of dawn till after darkness has fallen, these red-cloaked lamas hold services in the dim incense-laden air of the great Machin-dranath temple, the cathedral of Lhasa; and thither they crowd thrice a day to receive their doles of tea and soup and money. The cathedral is a vast building, standing in the centre of the city, and surrounded by bazaars and shops. The idols in it are richly inlaid with gold and precious stones. Twenty-four days after the Jalno has ceased to have authority, he assumes it again, and for ten days acts in the same arbitrary manner as before. On the first of the ten days the priests assemble as before at the cathedral, pray to the gods to prevent sickness and other evils among the people, "and, as a peace-offering, sacrifice one man. The man is not killed purposely, but the ceremony he undergoes often proves fatal.¹ Grain is thrown against his head, and his face is painted half white, half black." Thus grotesquely disguised, and carrying a coat of skin on his arm, he is called the King of the Years, and sits daily in the market-place, where he helps himself to whatever he likes and goes about shaking a black yak's tail over the people, who thus transfer their bad luck to him. On the tenth day, all the troops in Lhasa march to the great temple and form in line before it. The King of the Years is brought forth from the temple and receives small donations from the assembled multitude. He then ridicules the Jalno, saying to him, "What we perceive through the five senses is no illusion. All you teach is untrue," and the like. The Jalno, who represents the Grand Lama for the time being, contests these heretical opinions; the dispute waxes warm, and at last both agree to decide the

¹ The ceremony referred to is perhaps the one performed on the tenth day, as described in the text.

questions at issue by a cast of the dice, the Jalno offering to change places with the scapegoat should the throw be against him. If the King of the Years wins, much evil is prognosticated; but if the Jalno wins, there is great rejoicing, for it proves that his adversary has been accepted by the gods as a victim to bear all the sins of the people of Lhasa. Fortune, however, always favours the Jalno, who throws sixes with unvarying success, while his opponent turns up only ones. Nor is this so extraordinary as at first sight it might appear; for the Jalno's dice are marked with nothing but sixes and his adversary's with nothing but ones. When he sees the finger of Providence thus plainly pointed against him, the King of the Years is terrified and flees away upon a white horse, with a white dog, a white bird, salt, and so forth, which have all been provided for him by the government. His face is still painted half white and half black, and he still wears his leathern coat. The whole populace pursues him, hooting, yelling, and firing blank shots in volleys after him. Thus driven out of the city, he is detained for seven days in the great chamber of horrors at the Samyas monastery, surrounded by monstrous and terrific images of devils and skins of huge serpents and wild beasts. Thence he goes away into the mountains of Chetang, where he has to remain an outcast for several months or a year in a narrow den. If he dies before the time is out, the people say it is an auspicious omen; but if he survives, he may return to Lhasa and play the part of scapegoat over again the following year.¹

¹ "Report of a Route Survey by Pundit — from Nepal to Lhasa," etc., *Journal Royal Geogr. Soc.* xxxviii. (1868), pp. 167, 170 sq.; "Four Years' Journeying through Great Tibet, by one of the Trans-Himalayan Explorers," *Proceed. Royal Geogr. Soc.* N.S. vii. (1885), p. 67 sq.; L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet* (London, 1895), pp. 504 sqq., 512 sq.; J. L. Dutreuil de Rhins, *Mission Scientifique dans la Haute Asie 1890-1895: Récit du Voyage* (Paris, 1897), p. 257 sq. The accounts supplement each other, though they differ in some particulars. I have endeavoured to combine them. Accord-

ing to the last of the accounts referred to, which however rests on second-hand information, at one point of the ceremonies the troops march thrice round the temple and fire numerous volleys of musketry to drive away the demons. With the like intent they discharge a great cannon, said to be a thousand years old, which bears the inscription, "I am the destroyer of rebellion." The same account speaks of a "dance of axes" performed by young people, a festival of lanterns, an exhibition of bas-reliefs in butter, a horse-race, a foot-race, and a solemn blessing of the people by the Grand Lama.

This quaint ceremonial, still annually observed in the secluded capital of Buddhism—the Rome of Asia—is particularly interesting because it exhibits, in a clearly marked religious stratification, a series of divine redeemers themselves redeemed, of vicarious sacrifices vicariously atoned for, of gods undergoing a process of fossilisation, who, while they retain the privileges, have disburdened themselves of the pains and penalties of divinity. In the Jalno we may without undue straining discern a successor of those temporary kings, those mortal gods, who purchase a short lease of power and glory at the price of their lives. That he is the temporary substitute of the Grand Lama is certain; that he is, or was once, liable to act as scapegoat for the people is made nearly certain by his offer to change places with the real scapegoat—the King of the Years—if the arbitrament of the dice should go against him. It is true that the conditions under which the question is now put to the hazard have reduced the offer to an idle form. But such forms are no mere mushroom growths, springing up of themselves in a night. If they are now lifeless formalities, empty husks devoid of significance, we may be sure that they once had a life and a meaning; if at the present day they are blind alleys leading nowhere, we may be certain that in former days they were paths that led somewhere, if only to death. That death was the goal to which of old the Tibetan scapegoat passed after his brief period of licence in the market-place, is a conjecture that has much to commend it. Analogy suggests it; the blank shots fired after him, the statement that the ceremony often proves fatal, the belief that his death is a happy omen, all confirm it. We need not wonder then that the Jalno, after paying so dear to act as deputy-deity for a few weeks, should have preferred to die by deputy rather than in his own person when his time was up. The painful but necessary duty was accordingly laid on some poor devil, some social outcast, some wretch with whom the world had gone hard, who readily agreed to throw away his life at the end of a few days if only he might have his fling in the meantime. For observe that while the time allowed to the original deputy—the Jalno—

was measured by weeks, the time allowed to the deputy's deputy was cut down to days, ten days according to one authority, seven days according to another. So short a rope was doubtless thought a long enough tether for so black or sickly a sheep; so few sands in the hour-glass, slipping so fast away, sufficed for one who had wasted so many precious years. Hence in the jack-pudding who now masquerades with motley countenance in the market-place of Lhasa, sweeping up misfortune with a black yak's tail, we may fairly see the substitute of a substitute, the vicar of a vicar, the proxy on whose back the heavy burden was laid when it had been lifted from nobler shoulders. But the clue, if we have followed it aright, does not stop at the Jalno; it leads straight back to the pope of Lhasa himself, the Grand Lama, of whom the Jalno is merely the temporary vicar. The analogy of many customs in many lands points to the conclusion that, if this human-divinity stoops to resign his ghostly power for a time into the hands of a substitute, it is, or rather was once, for no other reason than that the substitute might die in his stead. Thus through the mist of ages unilluminated by the lamp of history, the tragic figure of the pope of Buddhism—God's vicar on earth for Asia—looms dim and sad as the man-god who bore his people's sorrows, the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

The foregoing survey of the custom of publicly expelling the accumulated evils of a village or town or country suggests a few general observations. In the first place, it will not be disputed that what I have called the immediate and the mediate expulsions of evil are identical in intention; in other words, that whether the evils are conceived of as invisible or as embodied in a material form, is a circumstance entirely subordinate to the main object of the ceremony, which is simply to effect a total clearance of all the ills that have been infesting a people. If any link were wanting to connect the two kinds of expulsion, it would be furnished by such a practice as that of sending the evils away in a litter or a boat. For here, on the one hand, the evils are invisible and intangible; and, on the other hand, there is a visible and tangible vehicle to convey them away. And a scapegoat is nothing more than such a vehicle.

In the second place, when a general clearance of evils is resorted to periodically, the interval between the celebrations of the ceremony is commonly a year, and the time of year when the ceremony takes place usually coincides with some well-marked change of season—such as the beginning or end of winter in the arctic and temperate zones, and the beginning or end of the rainy season in the tropics. The increased mortality which such climatic changes are apt to produce, especially amongst ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed savages, is set down by primitive man to the agency of demons, who must accordingly be expelled. Hence, in the tropical regions of New Britain and Peru, the devils are or were driven out at the beginning of the rainy season; hence, on the dreary coasts of Baffin Land, they are banished at the approach of the bitter arctic winter. When a tribe has taken to husbandry, the time for the general expulsion of devils is naturally made to agree with one of the great epochs of the agricultural year, as sowing, or harvest; but, as these epochs themselves often coincide with changes of season, it does not follow that the transition from the hunting or pastoral to the agricultural life involves any alteration in the time of celebrating this great annual rite. Some of the agricultural communities of India and the Hindoo Koosh, as we have seen, hold their general clearance of demons at harvest, others at sowing-time. But, at whatever season of the year it is held, the general expulsion of devils commonly marks the beginning of the new year. For, before entering on a new year, people are anxious to rid themselves of the troubles that have harassed them in the past; hence it comes about that amongst so many people the beginning of the new year is inaugurated with a solemn and public banishment of evil spirits.

In the third place, it is to be observed that this public and periodic expulsion of devils is commonly preceded or followed by a period of general licence, during which the ordinary restraints of society are thrown aside, and all offences, short of the gravest, are allowed to pass unpunished. In Guinea and Tonquin the period of licence precedes the public expulsion of demons; and the suspension of the ordinary government in Lhasa previous to the expulsion of

the scapegoat is perhaps a relic of a similar period of universal licence. Amongst the Hos the period of licence follows the expulsion of the devil. Amongst the Iroquois it hardly appears whether it preceded or followed the banishment of evils. In any case, the extraordinary relaxation of all ordinary rules of conduct on such occasions is doubtless to be explained by the general clearance of evils which precedes or follows it. On the one hand, when a general riddance of evil and absolution from all sin is in immediate prospect, men are encouraged to give the rein to their passions, trusting that the coming ceremony will wipe out the score which they are running up so fast. On the other hand, when the ceremony has just taken place, men's minds are freed from the oppressive sense, under which they generally labour, of an atmosphere surcharged with devils; and in the first revulsion of joy they overleap the limits commonly imposed by custom and morality. When the ceremony takes place at harvest-time, the elation of feeling which it excites is further stimulated by the state of physical wellbeing produced by an abundant supply of food.¹

¹ In the Dassera festival, as celebrated in Nepaul, we seem to have another instance of the annual expulsion of demons preceded by a time of licence. The festival occurs at the beginning of October and lasts ten days. "During its continuance there is a general holiday among all classes of the people. The city of Kathmandu at this time is required to be purified, but the purification is effected rather by prayer than by water-cleansing. All the courts of law are closed, and all prisoners in jail are removed from the precincts of the city. . . . The Kalendar is cleared, or there is a jail-delivery always at the Dassera of all prisoners." This seems a trace of a period of licence. At this time "it is a general custom for masters to make an annual present, either of money, clothes, buffaloes, goats, etc. to such servants as have given satisfaction during the past year. It is in this respect, as well as in the feasting and drinking which goes on, something like our 'boxing-time' at Christmas." On

the seventh day at sunset there is a parade of all the troops in the capital, including the artillery. At a given signal the regiments begin to fire, the artillery takes it up, and a general firing goes on for about twenty minutes, when it suddenly ceases. This probably represents the expulsion of the demons. "The grand cutting of the rice-crops is always postponed till the Dassera is over, and commences all over the valley the very day afterwards." See the description of the festival in Oldfield's *Sketches from Nepal*, ii. 342-351. On the Dassera in India, see Dubois, *Mœurs, Institutions et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde*, ii. 329 sqq. Amongst the Wasunhill of East Africa New Year's Day was formerly a day of general licence, "every man did as he pleased. Old quarrels were settled, men were found dead on the following day, and no inquiry was instituted about the matter" (Ch. New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa*, p. 65). An annual period of anarchy and licence, lasting

Fourthly, the employment of a divine man or animal as a scapegoat is especially to be noted; indeed, we are here directly concerned with the custom of banishing evils only in so far as these evils are believed to be transferred to a god who is afterwards slain. It may be suspected that the custom of employing a divine man or animal as a public scapegoat is much more widely diffused than appears from the examples cited. For, as has already been pointed out, the custom of killing a god dates from so early a period of human history that in later ages, even when the custom continues to be practised, it is liable to be misinterpreted. The divine character of the animal or man is forgotten, and he comes to be regarded merely as an ordinary victim. This is especially likely to be the case when it is a divine man who is killed. For when a nation becomes civilised, if it does not drop human sacrifices altogether, it at least selects as victims only such wretches as would be put to death at any rate. Thus, as in the Sacaean festival at Babylon, the killing of a god may come to be confounded with the execution of a criminal.

If we ask why a dying god should be chosen to take upon himself and carry away the sins and sorrows of the people, it may be suggested that in the practice of using the divinity as a scapegoat we have a combination of two customs which were at one time distinct and independent. On the one hand we have seen that it has been customary to kill the human or animal god in order to save his divine life from being weakened by the inroads of age. On the other hand we have seen that it has been customary to have a general expulsion of evils and sins once a year. Now, if it occurred to people to combine these two customs, the result would be the employment of the dying god as a scapegoat. He was killed, not originally to take away sin, but to save the divine life from the degeneracy of old age; but, since he had to be killed at any rate, people may have thought that they might as well seize the opportunity to lay

three days, is reported by Borelli to be observed by some of the Gallas (Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die geistige Cultur der Dandkil, Galla und Somali*, p. 158). In Ashantee the

annual festival of the new yams is a time of general licence. See Note C, "Offerings of First-fruits," vol. ii. p. 459.

upon him the burden of their sufferings and sins, in order that he might bear it away with him to the unknown world beyond the grave.

The use of the divinity as a scapegoat clears up the ambiguity which, as we saw, appears to hang about the European folk-custom of "carrying out Death."¹ Grounds have been shown for believing that in this ceremony the so-called Death was originally the spirit of vegetation, who was annually slain in spring, in order that he might come to life again with all the vigour of youth. But, as I pointed out, there are certain features in the ceremony which are not explicable on this hypothesis alone. Such are the marks of joy with which the effigy of Death is carried out to be buried or burnt, and the fear and abhorrence of it manifested by the bearers. But these features become at once intelligible if we suppose that the Death was not merely the dying god of vegetation, but also a public scapegoat, upon whom were laid all the evils that had afflicted the people during the past year. Joy on such an occasion is natural and appropriate; and if the dying god appears to be the object of that fear and abhorrence which are properly due not to himself, but to the sins and misfortunes with which he is laden, this arises merely from the difficulty of distinguishing or at least of marking the distinction between the bearer and the burden. When the burden is of a baleful character, the bearer of it will be feared and shunned just as much as if he were himself instinct with those dangerous properties of which, as it happens, he is only the vehicle. Similarly we have seen that disease-laden and sin-laden boats are dreaded and shunned by East Indian peoples.² Again, the view that in these popular customs the Death is a scapegoat as well as a representative of the divine spirit of vegetation derives some support from the circumstance that its expulsion is always celebrated in spring and chiefly by Slavonic peoples. For the Slavonic year began in spring;³ and thus, in one of its aspects, the ceremony of "carrying out Death" would be an example of the widespread custom of expelling the

¹ See above, vol. ii. p. 107 *sq.*

³ H. Usener, "Italische Mythen," *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F. (1875), xxx. 194.

² Above, pp. 98, 106.

accumulated evils of the past year before entering on a new one.

We are now prepared to notice the use of the scapegoat in classical antiquity. Every year on the fourteenth of March a man clad in skins was led in procession through the streets of Rome, beaten with long white rods, and driven out of the city. He was called Mamurius Veturius,¹ that is, "the old Mars,"² and as the ceremony took place on the day preceding the first full moon of the old Roman year (which began on the first of March), the skin-clad man must have represented the Mars of the past year, who was driven out at the beginning of a new one. Now Mars was originally not a god of war but of vegetation. For it was to Mars that the Roman husbandman prayed for the prosperity of his corn and his vines, his fruit-trees and his copses;³ it was to Mars that the priestly college of the Arval Brothers, whose business it was to sacrifice for the growth of the crops,⁴ addressed their petitions almost exclusively;⁵ and it was to Mars, as we saw,⁶ that a horse was sacrificed in October to secure an abundant harvest. Moreover, it was to Mars, under his title of "Mars of the woods" (*Mars Silvanus*) that farmers offered sacrifice for the welfare of their cattle.⁷ We have already seen that cattle are commonly supposed to be under the special patronage of tree-gods.⁸ Once more, the consecration

¹ Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iii. 29, iv. 36. Lydus places the expulsion on the Ides of March, that is 15th March. But this seems to be a mistake. See Usener, "Italische Mythen," *Rheinisches Museum*, xxx. 209 sqq. Again, Lydus does not expressly say that Mamurius Veturius was driven out of the city, but he implies it by mentioning the legend that his mythical prototype was beaten with rods and expelled the city. Lastly, Lydus only mentions the name Mamurius. But the full name Mamurius Veturius is preserved by Varro, *Ling. Lat.* vi. 45; Festus, ed. Müller, p. 131; Plutarch, *Numa*, 13. Mr. W. Warde Fowler is disposed to be sceptical as to the antiquity of the ceremony of expelling Mamurius. See his *Roman Festivals of the period of the Republic*, pp. 44-50.

² Usener, *op. cit.* p. 212 sq.; Roscher, *Apollon und Mars*, p. 27; Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,³ i. 360; Vaniček, *Griechisch-lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, p. 715. The three latter scholars take Veturius as = *annuus*, because *vetus* is etymologically equivalent to *eros*. But, as Usener argues, it seems quite unallowable to take the Greek meaning of the word instead of the Latin.

³ Cato, *De agri cult.* 141.

⁴ Varro, *De lingua latina*, v. 85.

⁵ See the song of the Arval Brothers in *Acta Fratrum Arvalium*, ed. Henzen, p. 26 sq.; Wordsworth, *Fragments and Specimens of Early Latin*, p. 158.

⁶ Vol. ii. p. 315 sq.

⁷ Cato, *De agri cult.* 83.

⁸ Above, vol. i. pp. 192 sqq., 230.

of the vernal month of March to Mars seems to point him out as the deity of the sprouting vegetation. Thus the Roman custom of expelling the old Mars at the beginning of the new year in spring is identical with the Slavonic custom of "carrying out Death," if the view here taken of the latter custom is correct. The similarity of the Roman and Slavonic customs has been already remarked by scholars, who appear, however, to have taken Mamurius Veturius and the corresponding figures in the Slavonic ceremonies to be representatives of the old year rather than of the old god of vegetation.¹ It is possible that ceremonies of this kind may have come to be thus interpreted in later times even by the people who practised them. But the personification of a period of time is too abstract an idea to be primitive.² However, in the Roman, as in the Slavonic, ceremony, the representative of the god appears to have been treated not only as a deity of vegetation but also as a scapegoat. His expulsion implies this; for there is no reason why the god of vegetation, as such, should be expelled the city. But it is otherwise if he is also a scapegoat; it then becomes necessary to drive him beyond the boundaries, that he may carry his sorrowful burden away to other lands. And, in fact, Mamurius Veturius appears to have been driven away to the land of the Oscans, the enemies of Rome.³

¹ Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,³ i. 360; Roscher, *Apollon und Mars*, p. 49; *id.*, *Lexikon d. griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2408 sq.; Usener, *op. cit.* The ceremony also closely resembles the Highland New Year ceremony described above, vol. ii. p. 447.

² But the Biyars, a mixed tribe of North-Western India, observe an annual ceremony which they call "burning the old year." The old year is represented by a stake of the wood of the cotton-tree, which is planted in the ground at an appointed place outside of the village, and then burned on the day of the full moon in the month of Pûs. Fire is first put to it by the village priest, and then all the people follow his example, parch stalks of barley in the fire, and afterwards eat them. Next day they throw the ashes of the burnt wood in the air; and on the

morrow the festival ends with a regular saturnalia, at which decency and order are forgotten. See W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, ii. 137 sq. Compare, *id.*, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 392.

³ Propertius, v. 2. 61 sq.; Usener, *op. cit.* p. 210. One of the functions of the Salii or dancing priests, who during March went up and down the city dancing, singing, and clashing their swords against their shields (Livy, i. 20; Plutarch, *Numa*, 13; Dionysius Halicarn. *Antiq.* ii. 70), may have been to rout out the evils or demons from all parts of the city, as a preparation for transferring them to the scapegoat Mamurius Veturius. Similarly, as we have seen (above, p. 108), among the Iroquois, men in fantastic

The ancient Greeks were also familiar with the use of a human scapegoat. In Plutarch's native town of Chaeronea a ceremony of this kind was performed by the chief magistrate at the Town Hall, and by each householder at his own home. It was called the "expulsion of hunger." A slave was beaten with rods of the *agnus castus*, and turned out of doors with the words, "Out with hunger, and in with wealth and health."

costume went about collecting the sins of the people as a preliminary to transferring them to the scapegoat dogs. We have had many examples of armed men rushing about the streets and houses to drive out demons and evils of all kinds. The blows which were showered on Mamurius Veturius seem to have been administered by the Salii (Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* vii. 188; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 24. 3; Preller, *Rom. Myth.*³ i. 360, note 1; Koscher, *Apollon und Mars*, p. 49). The reason for beating the scapegoat will be explained presently. As priests of Mars, the god of agriculture, the Salii probably had also certain agricultural functions. They were named from the remarkable leaps which they made. Now we have seen (vol. i. p. 36 *sq.*) that dancing and leaping high are common sympathetic charms to make the crops grow high. Was it one of the functions of the Salii to dance and leap on the fields at the spring or autumn sowing, or at both? The dancing processions of the Salii took place in October as well as in March (Marquardt, *Sacralwesen*,⁴ p. 436 *sq.*), and the Romans sowed both in spring and autumn (Columella, ii. 9. 6 *sq.*). In their song the Salii mentioned Saturnus or Sacturnus, the god of sowing (Festus, p. 325, ed. Müller; *Sacturnus* is an emendation of Ritschl's; see Wordsworth, *Fragment and Specimens of Early Latin*, p. 405). The weapons borne by the Salii, while effective against demons in general, may have been especially directed against the demons who steal the seed-corn or the ripe grain. Compare the Khond and Hindoo Koosh customs described above, p. 79 *sq.* In Western Africa the field labours of tilling and sowing are sometimes accompanied by dances

of armed men on the field. See Labat, *Voyage du Chevalier des Marchais en Guinée, Isles voisines et à Cayenne*, ii. p. 99 of the Paris ed., p. 80 of the Amsterdam ed.; Olivier de Sanderval, *De l'Atlantique au Niger par le Foulah-Djallon* (Paris, 1883), p. 230. In Calicut (Southern India) "they plough the land with oxen as we do, and when they sow the rice in the field they have all the instruments of the city continually sounding and making merry. They also have ten or twelve men clothed like devils, and these unite in making great rejoicing with the players on the instruments, in order that the devil may make that rice very productive" (Varthema, *Travels* (Hakluyt Soc. 1863), p. 166 *sq.*). The resemblance of the Salii to the sword-dancers of Northern Europe has been pointed out by K. Müllenhoff ("Ueber den Schwerttanz," in *Festgaben für Gustav Hoyer*, Berlin, 1871). In England the Morris Dancers who accompanied the procession of the plough through the streets on Plough Monday (the first Monday after Twelfth Day) sometimes wore sworls (Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 505, Bohn's ed.), and sometimes they "wore small bunches of corn in their hats, from which the wheat was soon shaken out by the ungainly jumping which they called dancing. . . . Bessy rattled his box and danced so high that he showed his worsted stockings and corduroy breeches" (Chambers, *Book of Days*, i. 94). It is to be observed that in the "Lord of Misrule," who reigned from Christmas till Twelfth Night (see Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 497 *sqq.*), we have a clear trace of one of those periods of general licence and suspension of ordinary government which so commonly occur at the end

When Plutarch held the office of chief magistrate of his native town he performed this ceremony at the Town Hall, and he has recorded the discussion to which the custom afterwards gave rise.¹ The ceremony closely resembles the Japanese, Hindoo, and Highland customs already described.²

But in civilised Greece the custom of the scapegoat took darker forms than the innocent rite over which the amiable and pious Plutarch presided. Whenever Marseilles, one of the busiest and most brilliant of Greek colonies, was ravaged by a plague, a man of the poorer classes used to offer himself as a scapegoat. For a whole year he was maintained at the public expense, being fed on choice and pure food. At the expiry of the year he was dressed in sacred garments, decked with holy branches, and led through the whole city, while prayers were uttered that all the evils of the people might fall on his head. He was then cast out of the city.³ The Athenians regularly maintained a number of degraded and useless beings at the public expense; and when any calamity, such as plague, drought, or famine, befell the city, they sacrificed two of these outcasts as scapegoats. One of the victims was sacrificed for the men and the other for the women. The former wore round his neck a string of black, the latter a string of white figs. Sometimes, it seems, the victim slain on behalf of the women was a woman. They were led about the city and then sacrificed, apparently by being stoned to death outside the city.⁴ But such sacrifices were not confined to extraordinary occasions of public calamity; it appears that every year, at the festival of the

of the old year or beginning of the new one in connection with a general expulsion of evils. The fact that this period of licence immediately preceded the procession of the Morris Dancers on Plough Monday seems to indicate that the functions of these dancers were like those which I have attributed to the Salii. But the parallel cannot be drawn out here. Cp. meantime Dyer, *British Popular Customs*, pp. 31, 39. The Salii were said to have been founded by *Morrius*, King of Veii (Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* viii. 285). *Morrius* seems to be etymologically the same with *Manurius* and

Mars (Usener, "Italische Mythen," *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F., xxx. p. 213). Can the English *Morris* (in *Morris* dancers) be the same?

¹ Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* vii. 8.

² See above, pp. 82 sq., 108.

³ Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* iii. 57, following Petronius.

⁴ Helladius, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 534 A, ed. Bekker; Schol. on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 734, and on *Knights*, 1136; Hesychius, s.v. *φάρμακος*; cp. Suidas, s.vv. *κάθαρμα*, *φάρμακος*, and *φάρμακος*; Lysias, *Orat.* vi. 53. That they were stoned is an inference from Harpocration. See next note.

Thargelia in May, two victims, one for the men and one for the women, were led out of Athens and stoned to death.¹ The city of Abdera in Thrace was publicly purified once a year, and one of the burghers, set apart for the purpose, was stoned to death as a scapegoat or vicarious sacrifice for the life of all the others.²

From the Lover's Leap, a white bluff at the southern end of their island, the Leucadians used annually to hurl a criminal into the sea as a scapegoat. But to lighten his fall they fastened live birds and feathers to him, and a flotilla of small boats waited below to catch him and convey him beyond the boundary. Probably these humane precautions were a mitigation of an earlier custom of flinging the scapegoat into the sea to drown, just as in Kumaon the custom of letting a man slide down a rope from the top of a cliff appears to be a modification of an older practice of putting him to death. The Leucadian ceremony took place at the time of a sacrifice to Apollo, who had a temple or sanctuary on the spot.³ As practised by the Greeks of Asia Minor in the sixth century B.C., the custom of the scapegoat was as follows. When a city suffered from plague, famine, or other public calamity, an ugly or deformed person was chosen to take upon himself all the evils which afflicted the community. He was brought to a suitable place, where dried figs, a barley loaf, and cheese were put into his hand. These he ate. Then he was beaten seven times upon his genital organs with squills and branches of the wild fig and other wild trees. Afterwards he was burned on a pyre built of the wood of forest trees ;

¹ Harpocration, *s.v.* *φαρμακός*, who says δύο ἄνδρες Ἀθηναίων ἐξήγον καθάρσια ἐσομένου τῆς πόλεως ἐν τοῖς Θαργηλιαῖς, ἕνα μὲν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀνδρῶν, ἕνα δὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν γυναικῶν. He does not expressly state that they were put to death ; but as he says that the ceremony was an imitation of the execution of a mythical Pharmacus who was stoned to death, we may infer that the victims were killed by being stoned. Suidas (*s.v.* *φάρμακος*) copies Harpocration.

² Ovid, *Ibis*, 467 sq.

³ *Aut te deinceps certis Abdera diebus*

Saxaque devotum grandine plura petant,"

with the scholiast's note, quoted by J. Töpffer, *Beiträge zur griechischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Berlin, 1897), p. 132. The scholiast refers to Callimachus as his authority.

³ Strabo, x. 2. 9. According to the manuscript reading in Photius's *Lexicon*, *s.v.* *Λευκάρις*, the priests flung themselves into the sea ; but the reading has been altered by the editors. As to the Kumaon ceremony see above, p. 104 sq.

and his ashes were cast into the sea.¹ A similar custom appears to have been annually celebrated by the Asiatic Greeks at the harvest festival of the Thargelia.²

In the ritual just described the scourging of the victim with squills, branches of the wild fig, and so forth, cannot have been intended to aggravate his sufferings, otherwise any stick would have been good enough to beat him with. The true meaning of this part of the ceremony has been explained by W. Mannhardt.³ He points out that the ancients attributed to squills a magical power of averting evil influences, and accordingly hung them up at the doors of their houses and made use of them in purificatory rites.⁴ Hence the Arcadian custom of whipping the image of Pan with squills at a festival, or whenever the hunters returned empty-handed,⁵ must have been meant, not to punish the god, but to purify him from the harmful influences which were impeding him in the exercise of his divine functions as a god who should supply the hunter with game. Similarly the object of beating the human scapegoat on the genital organs with squills and so on, must have been to release his reproductive energies from any restraint or spell under which they might be laid by demoniacal or other malignant agency; and as the Thargelia at which he was annually sacrificed was an early harvest festival,⁶ we must recognise in him a representative of the creative and fertilising god of vegetation. The representative of the god was annually slain for the purpose I have indicated, that of maintaining the divine life in perpetual vigour, untainted by the weakness of age; and before he was put to death it was not unnatural to stimulate his reproductive powers in order that these might be transmitted in full activity to his successor, the new god or new embodiment of the old god,

¹ Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, v. 726-761. Tzetzes's authority is the satirical poet Hipponax.

² This may be inferred from the verse of Hipponax, quoted by Athenaeus, ix. p. 370 B, where for *φαρμάκον* we should perhaps read *φαρμακόν* with Schneidewin (*Poetae Lyrici Graeci*,³ ed. Bergk, ii. 763).

³ See his *Mytholog. Forschungen*, p.

113 sqq., especially 123 sq., 133.

⁴ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xx. 101; Dioscorides, *De mat. med.* ii. 202; Lucian, *Necyom.* 7; *id.*, *Alexander*, 47; Theophrastus, *Superstitious Man*.

⁵ Theocritus, vii. 106 sqq. with the scholiast.

⁶ Cp. Aug. Mommsen, *Heortologie*, 414 sqq.; W. Mannhardt, *A.W.F.* p. 215.

who was doubtless supposed immediately to take the place of the one slain.¹ Similar reasoning would lead to a similar treatment of the scapegoat on special occasions, such as drought or famine. If the crops did not answer to the expectation of the husbandman, this would be attributed to some failure in the generative powers of the god whose function it was to produce the fruits of the earth. It might be thought that he was under a spell or was growing old and feeble. Accordingly he was slain in the person of his representative, with all the ceremonies already described, in order that, born young again, he might infuse his own youthful vigour into the stagnant energies of nature. On the same principle we can understand why Mamurius Veturius was beaten with rods, why the slave at the Chaeronean ceremony was beaten with the *agnus castus* (a tree to which magical properties were ascribed),² why the effigy of Death in some parts of Europe is assailed with sticks and stones, and why at Babylon the criminal who played the god was scourged before he was crucified. The purpose of the scourging was not to intensify the agony of the divine sufferer, but on the contrary to 'dispel any malignant influences by which at the supreme moment he might conceivably be beset.

The interpretation here given of the custom of beating the human scapegoat with certain plants is supported by many analogies. With the same intention some of the Brazilian Indians beat themselves on the genital organs with an aquatic plant, the white *aninga*, three days before or after the new moon.³ We have already had examples of the custom of beating sick people with the leaves of certain plants or with branches in order to rid them of noxious influences.⁴ Some of the Dravidian tribes of Northern India, who attribute epilepsy, hysteria, and similar maladies

¹ At certain sacrifices in Yucatan blood was drawn from the genitals of a human victim and smeared on the face of the idol. See De Landa, *Relation des choses de Yucatan*, ed. Brasseur de Bourbourg (Paris, 1864), p. 167. Was the original intention of this rite to transfuse into the god a fresh supply of reproductive energy?

² Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* ix. 26.

³ De Santa-Anna Nery, *Folk-lore Brésilien* (Paris, 1889), p. 253.

⁴ Above, pp. 2, 98 sq. Compare Plutarch, *Parallela*, 35, where a woman is represented as going from house to house striking sick people with a hammer and bidding them be whole.

to demoniacal possession, endeavour to cure the sufferer by thrashing him soundly with a sacred iron chain, which is believed to have the effect of immediately expelling the demon.¹ When a herd of camels refuses to drink, the Arabs will sometimes beat the male beasts on the back to drive away the jinn who are riding them and frightening the females.² In Bikol, the south-western part of Luzon, it was generally believed that if the evil spirit Aswang were not properly exorcised he took possession of the bodies of the dead and tormented them. Hence to deliver a corpse from his clutches the native priestesses used to beat it with a brush or whisk made of the leaves of the aromatic China orange, while they chanted a certain song, throwing their bodies into contortions and uttering shrill cries, as if the evil spirit had entered into themselves. The soul of the deceased, thus delivered from the cruel tyranny of Aswang, was then free to roam at pleasure along the charming lanes or in the thick shade of the forest.³

Sometimes it appears that a beating is administered for the purpose of ridding people of a ghost who may be clinging too closely to their persons; in such cases the blows, though they descend on the bodies of the living, are really aimed at the spirit of the dead, and have no other object than to drive it away, just as a coachman will flick the back of a horse with his whip to rid the beast of a fly. At a funeral in the island of Halmahera, before the coffin is lowered into the grave, all the relations whip themselves on the head and shoulders with wands made of plants which are believed to possess the power of keeping off evil spirits. The intention of the custom is said to be to bring back their own spectres or souls and to prevent them from following the ghost; but this may fairly be interpreted to mean that the blows are directed to brushing off the ghost, who would otherwise abstract the soul of the person

¹ W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, pp. 61, 100; *id.*, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, iii. 333, 441, 445.

² A. Certeux et E. H. Carnoy, *Algérie Traditionnelle* (Paris and

Algiers, 1884), p. 189.

³ H. Kern, "Een Spanisch schrijver over den godsdienst der heidensche Bikolais," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvii. (1897), p. 232 sq. The Spanish authority is Father José Castañón.

on whose body he was allowed to settle. This interpretation is strongly confirmed by the practice, observed by the same people on the same occasion, of throwing the trunk of a banana-tree into the grave, and telling the dead man that it is a companion for him; for this practice is expressly intended to prevent the deceased from feeling lonely, and so coming back to fetch away a friend.¹ The Banmanas of Senegambia think that the soul of a dead infant becomes for a time a wandering and maleficent spirit. Accordingly when a baby dies, all the uncircumcised children of the same sex in the village run about the streets in a band, each armed with three or four supple rods. Some of them enter every house to beg, and while they are doing so, one of the troop, propping himself against the wall with his hands, is lashed by another of the children on his back or legs till the blood flows. Each of the children takes it in turn to be thus whipped. The object of the whipping, we are told, "appears to be to preserve the uncircumcised child from being carried off by its comrade who has just died."² The severe scourgings inflicted on each other by some South American Indians at ceremonies connected with the dead may be similarly intended to chase away the dangerous ghost, who is conceived as sticking like a leech or a bur to the skin of the living.³

At the autumn festival in Peru people used to strike each other with torches, saying, "Let all harm go away."⁴ Indians of the Quixos, in South America, before they set out on a long hunting expedition, cause their wives to whip them with nettles, believing that this renders them fleet, and helps them to overtake the peccaries. They resort to the same proceeding as a cure for sickness.⁵ The Roocooyen

¹ J. M. van Baarda, "Ile de Halmahera," *Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, Quatrième Série, iii. (1892), p. 545. The custom of throwing a banana-trunk into the grave has been already noticed (vol. ii. p. 345).

² *Revue d'Ethnographie*, iii. (1885), p. 395 sq.

³ K. Schomburgk, *Reisen in Britisch-Guiana*, ii. 457 sqq.; Bernau,

Missionary Labours in British Guiana, p. 52; Von Martius, *Zur Ethnographie Amerika's*, p. 694 sq.; J. Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, p. 548.

⁴ Acosta, *History of the Indies*, vol. ii. p. 375 (Hakluyt Society). See above, p. 76.

⁵ Osculati, *Esplorazione delle regioni equatoriali lungo il Napo ed il fiume delle Amazzoni* (Milan, 1854), p. 118.

Indians of French Guiana train up young people in the way they should go by causing them to be stung by ants and wasps; and at the ceremony held for this purpose the grown-up people improve the occasion by allowing themselves to be whacked by the chief with a stick over the arms, the legs, and the chest. They appear to labour under an impression that this conveys to them all sorts of moral and physical excellences. One of the tribe, ambitious of acquiring the European virtues, begged a French traveller to be so kind as to give him a good hiding. The traveller did his best to gratify him, and the face of the Indian beamed with gratitude as the blows fell on his naked back.¹ The Delaware Indians had two sovereign remedies for sin; one was an emetic, the other a thrashing. In the latter case, the remedy was administered by means of twelve different sticks, with which the sinner was belaboured from the soles of his feet up to his neck. In both cases the sins were supposed to be expelled from the body, and to pass out through the throat.² At Mowat in New Guinea small boys are beaten lightly with sticks during December "to make them grow strong and hardy."³

In some parts of Eastern and Central Europe a similar custom is very commonly observed in spring. On the first of March the Albanians strike men and beast with cornel branches, believing that this is very good for their health.⁴ In March the Greek peasants of Cos switch their cattle, saying, "It is March, and up with your tail!" They think that the ceremony benefits the animals, and brings good luck. It is never observed at any other time of the year.⁵ In some parts of Mecklenburg it is customary to beat the cattle before sunrise on the morning of Good Friday with rods of buckthorn, which are afterwards concealed in some secret place where neither sun nor moon can shine on them. The belief is that though the blows light upon the animals,

¹ H. Coudreau, *Chez nos Indiens: quatre années dans la Guyane Française* (Paris, 1895), p. 544.

G. H. Lusk, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Indians in North America* (London, 1794), p. 37.

E. Beardmore, "The natives of

Mowat, Daudai, New Guinea," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix. (1890), p. 464.

³ J. G. v. Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* (Jena, 1854), i. 155.

⁵ W. H. D. Rouse, "Folklore from the southern Sporades," *Folk-lore*, x. (1899), p. 179.

the pain of them is felt by the witches who are riding the beasts.¹ In the neighbourhood of Iserlohn, in Westphalia, the herdsman rises at peep of dawn on May morning, climbs a hill, and cuts down the young rowan-tree which is the first to catch the beams of the rising sun. With this he returns to the farm-yard. The heifer which the farmer desires to "quicken" is then led to the dunghill, and the herdsman strikes it over the hind-quarters, the haunches, and the udders with a branch of the rowan-tree, saying,

"Quick, quick, quick!
Bring milk into the dugs.
The sap is in the birches.
The heifer receives a name.

"Quick, quick, quick!
Bring milk into the dugs.
The sap comes in the beeches,
The leaf comes on the oak.

"Quick, quick, quick!
Bring milk into the dugs.
In the name of the sainted Greia,
Gold-flower shall be thy name,"

and so on.² The intention of the ceremony appears to be to make sure that the heifer shall in due time yield a plentiful supply of milk; and this is perhaps supposed to be brought about by driving away the witches, who are particularly apt, as we have seen,³ to rob the cows of their milk on the morning of May Day. In the north-east of Scotland pieces of rowan-tree and woodbine, or of rowan alone, used to be placed over the doors of the cow-houses on May Day to keep the witches from the kine; and a still better way of attaining the same object was to tie a cross of rowan-tree wood with a scarlet thread to each animal's tail.⁴ In Germany also the rowan-tree is a protection against witchcraft;⁵ and Norwegian sailors and fishermen

¹ K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. p. 258, § 1348.

² J. F. L. Woeste, *Volksüberlieferungen in der Grafschaft Mark* (Iserlohn, 1848), p. 25 sq.; A. Kuhn, *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks*,² p. 161 sqq. The cere-

mony takes its name of "quicken" from *Quicke* or *Quickenbaum*, a German name for the rowan-tree.

³ Vol. I. p. 194, note 3.

⁴ W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 188.

⁵ Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² p. 106, § 145.

carry a piece of it in their boats for good luck.¹ Thus the benefit to young cows of beating them with rowan is not the positive one of pouring milk into their udders, but merely the negative one of averting evil influence; and the same may perhaps be said of most of the beatings with which we are here concerned.

On Good Friday and the two previous days people in Croatia and Slavonia take rods with them to church, and when the service is over they beat each other "fresh and healthy."² In some parts of Russia people returning from the church on Palm Sunday beat the children and servants who have stayed at home with palm branches, saying, "Sickness into the forest, health into the bones."³ In Germany and Austria the custom is widely known as *Schmeckostern* or "Easter smacks," being observed at Eastertide. People beat each other, commonly with fresh green twigs of the birch or the willow. The beating is supposed to bring good luck; the person beaten will, it is believed, be free of vermin during the summer, or will have no pains in his back or his legs for a year. Often it is the women only who are treated to "Easter smacks," but not uncommonly the two sexes beat each other, sometimes on different days. Frequently the women and girls are expected to present red Easter eggs to the men or boys who beat them. The custom appears to be of Slavonic origin; at least it prevails chiefly in districts where the people are, or once were, Slavs. In Masuren the rods or bundles of twigs are afterwards laid by and used to drive the cattle out to pasture for the first time.⁴

If the view here taken of the Greek scapegoat is correct, it obviates an objection which might otherwise be brought against the main argument of this chapter. To the theory that the priest of Aricia was slain as a representative of the

¹ Woeste, *op. cit.* p. 26.

² F. S. Krauss, *Kroatien und Slavonien* (Vienna, 1889), p. 108.

³ W. Mannhardt, *B. A.* p. 257.

⁴ Th. Veinaleken, *Mythen und Bräuche der Völker in Oesterreich*, p. 200 sq.; Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Festkalender aus Böhmen*, pp. 163-167;

M. Peter, *Volksheimliches aus Oesterreichisch-Schlesien*, ii. 285; W. Müller,

Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren, pp. 322, 399 sq.; J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch*, etc., im *Voigtlande*, p. 173 sq.; Wulke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² p. 70, § 83; M. Toppen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² p. 69; W. Mannhardt, *B. A.* pp. 258-263. See Mannhardt's whole discussion of such customs, *op. cit.* pp. 251-303, and *Myth. Forsch.* pp. 113-153.

spirit of the grove, it might have been objected that such a custom has no analogy in classical antiquity. But reasons have now been given for believing that the human being periodically and occasionally slain by the Asiatic Greeks was regularly treated as an embodiment of a divinity. Probably the persons whom the Athenians kept to be sacrificed were similarly treated as divine. That they were social outcasts did not matter. On the primitive view a man is not chosen to be the mouth-piece or embodiment of a god on account of his high moral qualities or social rank. The divine afflatus descends equally on the good and the bad, the lofty and the lowly. If then the civilised Greeks of Asia and Athens habitually sacrificed men whom they regarded as incarnate gods, there can be no inherent improbability in the supposition that at the dawn of history a similar custom was observed by the semi-barbarous Latins in the Arician Grove.

§ 16. *Killing the God in Mexico*

But the religion of ancient Mexico, as it was found and described by the Spanish conquerors in the sixteenth century, offers perhaps a closer parallel to the rule of the Arician priesthood, as I conceive that rule to have been originally observed. Certainly nowhere does the custom of killing the human representative of a god appear to have been carried out so systematically and on so extensive a scale as in Mexico. "They took a captive," says Acosta, "such as they thought good; and afore they did sacrifice him unto their idols, they gave him the name of the idol, to whom he should be sacrificed, and apparelled him with the same ornaments like their idol, saying that he did represent the same idol. And during the time that this representation lasted, which was for a year in some feasts, in others six months, and in others less, they revered and worshipped him in the same manner as the proper idol; and in the meantime he did eat, drink, and was merry. When he went through the streets the people came forth to worship him, and every one brought him an alms, with children and sick folks, that he might cure them, and bless them, suffering him to do all

things at his pleasure, only he was accompanied with ten or twelve men lest he should fly. And he (to the end he might be revered as he passed) sometimes sounded upon a small flute, that the people might prepare to worship him. The feast being come, and he grown fat, they killed him, opened him, and eat him, making a solemn sacrifice of him.¹ For example, at the annual festival of the great god Tezcatlipoca, which fell about Easter or a few days later, a young man was chosen to be the living image of Tezcatlipoca for a whole year. He had to be of unblemished body, and he was carefully trained to sustain his lofty part with becoming grace and dignity. During the year he was lapped in luxury, and the king himself took care that the future victim was apparelled in gorgeous attire, "for already he esteemed him as a god." Attended by eight pages clad in the royal livery, the young man roamed the streets of the capital day and night at his pleasure, carrying flowers and playing the flute. All who saw him fell on their knees before him and adored him, and he graciously acknowledged their homage. Twenty days before the festival at which he was to be sacrificed, four damsels, delicately nurtured, and bearing the names of four goddesses, were given him to be his brides. For five days before the sacrifice divine honours were showered on him more abundantly than ever. The king remained in his palace, while the whole court went after the destined victim. Everywhere there were solemn banquets and balls. On the last day the young man, still attended by his pages, was ferried across the lake in a covered barge to a small and lonely temple, which, like the Mexican temples in general, rose in the form of a pyramid. As he ascended the stairs of the temple he broke at every step one of the flutes on which he had played in the days of his glory. On reaching the summit he was seized and held down on a block of stone, while a priest cut open his breast with a stone knife, and plucking out his heart, offered it to the sun. His head was hung among the skulls of previous victims, and his legs and

¹ Acosta, *History of the Indies*, vol. ii. p. 323 (Hakluyt Soc. 1880). I have modernised the spelling. Cp. Herrera,

General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America, trans. by Stevens, iii. 207 sq.

arms were cooked and prepared for the table of the lords. His place was immediately filled up by another young man, who for a year was treated with the same profound respect, and at the end of it shared the same fate.¹

The idea that the god thus slain in the person of his representative comes to life again immediately, was graphically represented in the Mexican ritual by skinning the slain man-god and clothing in his skin a living man, who thus became the new representative of the godhead. For example, at an annual festival a woman was sacrificed who represented Toci, the Mother of the Gods, or the Earth-goddess. She was dressed with the ornaments, and bore the name of the goddess, whose living image she was believed to be. After being feasted and diverted with sham fights for several days, she was taken at midnight to the summit of a temple, and beheaded on the shoulders of a man. The body was immediately flayed, and one of the priests, clothing himself in the skin, became the representative of the goddess Toci. The skin of the woman's thigh was removed separately, and a young man who represented the maize-god Cinteotl, the son of the goddess Toci, wrapt it round his face like a mask. Various ceremonies then followed, in which the two men, clad in the woman's skin, played the parts respectively of the god and goddess.² For example, when the principal victims had been slain, their blood was offered to the representative of the maize-god in a vessel decked with feathers. This he tasted, bending over the vessel and dipping his finger in the blood while he uttered a loud and doleful groan, which caused all that heard it to shudder and quake. At

¹ Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle Espagne* (Paris, 1880), pp. 61 sq., 96-99, 103; Acosta, *History of the Indies*, vol. ii. p. 350 sqq. (Hakluyt Society); Clavigero, *History of Mexico*, trans. by Cullen, i. 300; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale*, iii. 510-512; Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 319 sq. The sacramental banquet on the flesh of this dead god has been already noticed (vol. ii. p. 342 sq.). For other Mexican instances of persons

representing deities and slain in that character, see Sahagun, pp. 75, 116 sq., 123, 158 sq., 164 sq., 585 sqq., 589; Acosta, ii. 384 sqq.; Clavigero, i. 312; Brasseur de Bourbourg, iii. 517 sq., 519 sq., 527 sq., 529 sq., 535 sq.; Bancroft, ii. 325 sqq., 337 sq.

² Sahagun, pp. 16 sq., 68 sq., 133, 139; Brasseur de Bourbourg, iii. 523-525; Bancroft, iii. 353-359; E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 470 sq.

the same moment, as the Indians firmly believed, a tremor ran through the earth itself.¹ Again, at the annual festival of the god Totec, a number of captives having been killed and skinned, a priest clothed himself in one of their skins, and thus became the image of the god Totec. Then wearing the ornaments of the god—a crown of feathers, golden necklaces and ear-rings, scarlet shoes, and so forth—he was enthroned, and received offerings of the first-fruits and first flowers of the season, together with bunches of the maize which had been kept for seed.² Every fourth year the Quauhtitlans offered sacrifices in honour of the god of fire. On the eve of the festival they sacrificed two slaves, skinned them, and took out their thigh bones. Next day two priests clothed themselves in the skins, took the bones in their hands, and with solemn steps and dismal howlings descended the stairs of the temple. The people, who were assembled in crowds below, called out, "Behold, there come our gods."³

Thus it appears that human sacrifices of the sort I suppose to have prevailed at Aricia were, as a matter of fact, systematically offered on a large scale by a people whose level of culture was probably not inferior, if indeed it was not distinctly superior, to that occupied by the Italian races at the early period to which the origin of the Arician priesthood must be referred. The positive and indubitable evidence of the prevalence of such sacrifices in one part of the world may reasonably be allowed to strengthen the probability of their prevalence in places for which the evidence is less full and trustworthy. Taken all together, the facts which we have passed in review seem to show that the custom of killing men whom their worshippers regard as divine has prevailed in many parts of the world. But to clinch the argument, it is clearly desirable to prove that the custom of putting to death a human representative of a god was known and practised in ancient Italy elsewhere than in the Arician Grove. This proof I now propose to adduce.

¹ E. J. Payne, *op. cit.* i. 470.

² Sahagun, p. 524 *sq.* For this festival see also *id.*, pp. 37 *sq.*, 58

sq., 60, 87 *sqq.*, 93; Clavigero, i. 297 *p.* Bancroft, ii. 306 *sqq.*

³ Clavigero, i. 283.

§ 17. *The Saturnalia and Kindred Festivals*

In an earlier part of this chapter we saw that many peoples have been used to observe an annual period of licence, when the customary restraints of law and morality are thrown aside, when the whole population give themselves up to extravagant mirth and jollity, and when the darker passions find a vent which would never be allowed them in the more staid and sober course of ordinary life. Such outbursts of the pent-up forces of human nature, too often degenerating into wild orgies of lust and crime, occur most commonly at the end of the year, and are frequently associated, as I have had occasion to point out, with one or other of the agricultural seasons, especially with the time of sowing or of harvest. Now, of all these periods of licence the one which is best known and which in modern languages has given its name to the rest, is the Saturnalia. This famous festival fell in December, the last month of the Roman year, and was popularly supposed to commemorate the merry reign of Saturn, the god of sowing and of husbandry, who lived on earth long ago as a righteous and beneficent king of Italy, drew the rude and scattered dwellers on the mountains together, taught them to till the ground, gave them laws, and ruled in peace. His reign was the fabled Golden Age; the earth brought forth abundantly; no sound of war or discord troubled the happy world; no baleful love of lucre worked like poison in the blood of the industrious and contented peasantry. Slavery and private property were alike unknown; all men had all things in common. At last the good god, the kindly king, vanished suddenly; but his memory was cherished to distant ages, shrines were reared in his honour, and many hills and high places in Italy bore his name.¹ Yet the bright tradition of

¹ Virgil, *Aen.* viii. 319-327, with the comments of Servius; Ovid, *Fasti.* i. 233 sqq.; Lucian, *Saturnalia*, 7; Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 7. 21-26; Justin, xliii. 1. 3-5; Aurelius Victor, *Origo gentis Romanae*, 3; Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* i. 34. On Saturn and the Saturnalia see especially Preller, *Römische Mytho-*

logie,³ ii. 10 sqq. A good account of the Saturnalia, based on the texts of the classical writers, is given by Dezobry (*Rome au siècle d'Auguste*,³ iii. 143 sqq.). The name Saturn seems to be etymologically akin to *satus* and *satio*, "a sowing" or "planting." Compare Festus, s.v. "*Opima spolia*," p. 186 ed. Müller; "*ipse [Saturnus] agrorum*

his reign was crossed by a dark shadow: his altars are said to have been stained with the blood of human victims, for whom a more merciful age afterwards substituted effigies.¹ Of this gloomy side of the god's religion there is little or no trace in the descriptions which ancient writers have left us of the Saturnalia. Feasting and revelry and all the mad pursuit of pleasure are the features that seem to have especially marked this carnival of antiquity, as it went on for seven days in the streets and public squares and houses of ancient Rome from the seventeenth to the twenty-third of December.² But no feature of the festival is more remarkable, nothing in it seems to have struck the ancients themselves more than the licence granted to slaves at this time. The distinction between the free and the servile classes was temporarily abolished. The slave might rail at his master, intoxicate himself like his betters, sit down at table with them, and not even a word of reproof would be administered to him for conduct which at any other season might have been punished with stripes, imprisonment, or death.³ Nay, more, masters actually changed places with their slaves and waited on them at table; and not till the serf had done eating and drinking was the board cleared and dinner set for his master.⁴ So far was this inversion of ranks carried, that each household became for a time a mimic republic in which the high offices of state were discharged by the slaves, who gave their orders and laid down the law as if they were indeed invested with all the dignity of the consulship, the praetorship, and the bench.⁵ Like the pale reflection of power thus accorded to bondsmen at the Saturnalia was the mock kingship for which freemen cast lots at the same season. The person on whom the lot fell

cultor habetur, nominatus a saturo, tenensque falcem effugitur, quae est insigne agricolae."

¹ Dionysius Halicarn. *Ant. Rom.* i. 38; Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 7. 31; Lactantius, i. 21; Arnobius, ii. 68.

² For the general dissipation of the Saturnalia see Seneca, *Epist.* 18; for the seven days of the popular festival see Martial, xiv. 72. 2; Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 10. 2; Lucian, *Saturnalia*, 21.

³ Horace, *Sat.* ii. 7. 4 *sq.*; Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 7. 26; Justin, xlii. 1. 4; Plutarch, *Sulla*, 18; Lucian, *Saturnalia*, 5, 7.

⁴ Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 12. 7, i. 24. 23; Solinus, i. 35; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iii. 15; Athenaeus, xiv. p. 639 B; Dio Cassius, lx. 19.

⁵ Seneca, *Epist.* 47. 14. Compare Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 23.

enjoyed the title of king, and issued commands of a playful and ludicrous nature to his temporary subjects. One of them he might order to mix the wine, another to drink, another to sing, another to dance, another to speak in his own dispraise, another to carry a flute-girl on his back round the house.¹

Now, when we remember that the liberty allowed to slaves at this festive season was supposed to be an imitation of the state of society in Saturn's time, and that in general the Saturnalia passed for nothing more or less than a temporary revival or restoration of the reign of that merry monarch, we are tempted to surmise that the mock king who presided over the revels may have originally represented Saturn himself. The conjecture is strongly confirmed, if not established, by a very curious and interesting account of the way in which the Saturnalia was celebrated by the Roman soldiers stationed on the Danube in the reign of Maximian and Diocletian. The account is preserved in a narrative of the martyrdom of St. Dasius, which has lately been unearthed from a Greek manuscript in the Paris library, and published by Professor Franz Cumont of Ghent. Two briefer descriptions of the event and of the custom are contained in manuscripts at Milan and Berlin; one of them had already seen the light in an obscure volume printed at Urbino in 1727, but its importance for the history of the Roman religion, both ancient and modern, appears to have been overlooked until Professor Cumont drew the attention of scholars to all three narratives by publishing them together a few years ago.² According to these narratives, which have all the appearance of being authentic, and of which the longest is probably based on official documents, the Roman soldiers at Durostolum in Lower Moesia celebrated the Saturnalia year by year in the following manner. Thirty days before the festival they chose by lot from amongst themselves a young

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, xiii. 15; Arrian, *Epicteti Dissert.* i. 25. 8; Lucian, *Saturnalia*, 4.

² "Les Actes de S. Dasius," *Analecta Bellandiana*, xvi. (1897), pp. 5-16. I have to thank Prof. Cumont for

courteously sending me a copy of this important paper. The bearing of the new evidence on the Saturnalia has been further discussed by Messrs. Parmentier and Cumont ("Le roi des Saturnales," *Revue de Philologie*, xxi. (1897), pp. 143-153).

and handsome man, who was then clothed in royal attire to resemble Saturn. Thus arrayed and attended by a multitude of soldiers he went about in public with full licence to indulge his passions and to taste of every pleasure, however base and shameful. But if his reign was merry, it was short and ended tragically; for when the thirty days were up and the festival of Saturn had come, he cut his own throat on the altar of the god whom he personated.¹ In the year 303 A.D. the lot fell upon the Christian soldier Dasius, but he refused to play the part of the heathen god and soil his last days by debauchery. The threats and arguments of his commanding officer Bassus failed to shake his constancy, and accordingly he was beheaded, as the Christian martyrologist records with minute accuracy, at Durostolum by the soldier John on Friday the twentieth day of November, being the twenty-fourth day of the moon, at the fourth hour.

This account sets in a new and lurid light the office of the King of the Saturnalia, the ancient Lord of Misrule, who presided over the winter revels at Rome in the time of Horace and of Tacitus. It seems to prove that his business had not always been that of a mere barlequin or merry-andrew whose only care was that the revelry should run high and the fun grow fast and furious, while the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth, while the streets swarmed with festive crowds, and through the clear frosty air, far away to the north, Soracte showed his coronal of snow. When we compare this comic monarch of the gay, the civilised metropolis with his grim counterpart of the rude camp on the Danube, and when we remember the long array of similar figures, ludicrous yet tragic, who in other ages and in other lands, wearing mock crowns and wrapt in sceptred palls, have played their little pranks for a few brief hours or days, then passed before their time to a violent death, we can hardly doubt that in the King of the Saturnalia at Rome, as he is depicted by classical writers, we see only a

¹ The phrase of the Paris MS. is ambiguous (τοῖς ἀνώνυμοις καὶ μυσαροῖς εἰδώλοισι προσεκύμειν ἑαυτὸν σπονδῆν, ἀναιρούμενος ὑπὸ μαχαίρας); but the other two versions say plainly that the

mock king perished by his own hand (μέλλοντα ἑαυτὸν ἐπισφάζει τῷ θύμῳ τοῦ Κρόνου, Vatican MS.; ἑαυτὸν ἐπισφάζει αὐτοχείρως τῷ Κρόνῳ, Milan MS.).

feeble emasculated copy of that original, whose strong features have been fortunately preserved for us by the obscure author of the *Martyrdom of St. Dasius*. In other words, the martyrologist's account of the Saturnalia agrees so closely with the accounts of similar rites elsewhere, which could not possibly have been known to him, that the substantial accuracy of his description may be regarded as established; and further, since the custom of putting a mock king to death as a representative of a god cannot have grown out of a practice of appointing him to preside over a holiday revel, whereas the reverse may very well have happened, we are justified in assuming that in an earlier and more barbarous age it was the universal practice in ancient Italy, wherever the worship of Saturn prevailed, to choose a man who played the part and enjoyed all the traditionary privileges of Saturn for a season, and then died, whether by his own or another's hand, whether by the knife or the fire or on the gallows-tree, in the character of the good god who gave his life for the world. In Rome itself and other great towns the growth of civilisation had probably mitigated this cruel custom long before the Augustan age, and transformed it into the innocent shape it wears in the writings of the few classical writers who bestow a passing notice on the holiday King of the Saturnalia. But in remoter districts the older and sterner practice may long have survived; and even if after the unification of Italy the barbarous usage was suppressed by the Roman government, the memory of it would be handed down by the peasants and would tend from time to time, as still happens with the lowest forms of superstition among ourselves, to lead to a recrudescence of the practice, especially among the rude soldiery on the outskirts of the empire over whom the once iron hand of Rome was beginning to relax its grasp.¹

¹ The opinion that at Rome a man used to be sacrificed at the Saturnalia cannot be regarded as in itself improbable, when we remember that down apparently to the establishment of Christianity a human victim was slaughtered every year at Rome in honour of Latian Jupiter. See Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 9, *Contra Gnos.*

licos Scorpiace, 7; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 22 and 30; Lactantius, I, 21; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, II, 56. We may conjecture that at first the sacrifice took place on the top of the Alban Mountain, and was offered to Saturn, to whom, as we have seen, high places were sacred.

The resemblance between the Saturnalia of ancient and the Carnival of modern Italy has been often remarked; but in the light of all the facts that have come before us, we may well ask whether the resemblance does not amount to identity. I have shown that in Italy, Spain, and France, that is, in the countries where the influence of Rome has been deepest and most lasting, a conspicuous feature of the Carnival is a burlesque figure personifying the festive season, which after a short career of glory and dissipation is publicly shot, burnt, or otherwise destroyed, to the feigned grief or genuine delight of the populace. If the view here suggested of the Carnival is correct, this grotesque personage is no other than a direct successor of the old King of the Saturnalia, the master of the revels, the real man who personated Saturn and, when the revels were over, suffered a real death in his assumed character. The King of the Bean on Twelfth Night and the mediæval Bishop of Fools, Abbot of Unreason, or Lord of Misrule are figures of the same sort and may perhaps have had a similar origin.¹

¹ As to the King of the Bean, see Boemus, *Mores, leges et ritus omnium gentium* (Lyons, 1541), p. 222; Laisnel, de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France*, i. 19-29; Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 125; Schmitz, *Sitten und Sagen des Eifler Volkes*, i. 6 sq.; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 21 sqq.; Cortet, *Fêtes religieuses*, p. 29 sqq. As to the Bishop of Fools, Abbot of Unreason, Lord of Misrule, etc., see Brand, *op. cit.* i. 497 sqq.; Béranger-Féraud, *Superstitions et Survivances*, iv. 4 sqq. A clue to the original functions of the King of the Bean on Twelfth Night is perhaps furnished by the popular belief that the weather for the ensuing twelve months was determined by the weather of the twelve days from Christmas to Twelfth Day, the weather of each particular month being prognosticated from that of one particular day. See Brand, *op. cit.* i. 28; Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. 250, § 1292; Birlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, i. 468 sq., 470; Haltrich, *Zur Volkskunde der Siebenbürger*

Sachsen (Vienna, 1885), p. 282; Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen*, p. 175, § 29; Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, p. 231, § 4; Montanus, *Die deutsche Volksfeste*, p. 18; Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 20 sq.; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 473, § 237; Kuhn und Schwartz, *Nord-deutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 411, § 163; A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen*, ii. p. 115, § 354. May we conjecture that the King of the Bean formerly reigned during these twelve days, and that one of his chief functions was to perform magical ceremonies for ensuring good weather throughout the coming year? It is at least noticeable that the number twelve meets us often in the present line of inquiry. In Gloucestershire on the eve of the Twelfth Day the farm-servants used to assemble in a cornfield and kindle twelve fires in a row, round the largest of which they drank to the health of their master and the success of the harvest (Pennant, "Tour in Scot.

As the Carnival is always held on the last three days before the beginning of Lent, its date shifts somewhat from year to year, but it invariably falls either in February or March. Now, if the Saturnalia, like many other seasons of licence, was always observed at the end of the old year or the beginning of the new one, it must, like the Carnival, have been originally held in February or March at the time when March was the first month of the Roman year. So strong and persistent are the conservative instincts of the peasantry in respect to old custom, that it would be no matter for surprise if, in rural districts of Italy, the ancient festival continued to be celebrated at the ancient time long after the change of the calendar had shifted the official celebration of the Saturnalia in the towns from February to December. Latin Christianity, which struck at the root of official or civic paganism, has always been tolerant of its rustic cousins, the popular festivals and ceremonies which, unaffected by political and religious revolutions, by the passing of empires and of gods, have been carried on by the people with but little change from time immemorial, and represent in fact the original stock from which the state religions of classical antiquity were comparatively late offshoots. Thus it may very well have come about that while the new faith stamped out the Saturnalia in the towns, it suffered the original festival, disguised by a difference of date, to linger unmolested in the country; and so the old feast of Saturn, under the modern name of the Carnival, has reconquered the cities, and goes on merrily under the eye and with the sanction of the Catholic Church.

The opinion that the Saturnalia originally fell in February or the beginning of March receives some support from

land," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 49; Brand, *op. cit.* i. 33. compare 28). In Ireland on the same day "they use to set up as high as they can a sieve of oats, and in it a dozen of candles set round, and in the centre one larger, all lighted" (Sir Henry Piers, quoted by Brand, *op. cit.* i. 25). We shall see presently that at Athens the festival of Cronus—the Greek Saturn—fell on the twelfth day

of the month Hecatombaeon, and that a cake with twelve knobs was offered to him. In the ritual of ancient India there was a festival or sacred period of twelve days or nights (*Dvādasāha*), on which apparently the fortune and the crops of the year were supposed in some measure to depend. See A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Opfer und Zauber* (Strasburg, 1897), p. 5 sq.

the circumstance that the festival of the Matronalia, at which mistresses feasted their slaves just as masters did theirs at the Saturnalia, always continued to be held on the first of March, even when the Roman year began with January.¹ It is further not a little recommended by the consideration that this date would be eminently appropriate for the festival of Saturn, the old Italian god of sowing and planting. It has always been a puzzle to explain why such a festival should have been held at midwinter; but on the present hypothesis the mystery vanishes. With the Italian farmer February and March were the great season of the spring sowing and planting;² nothing could be more natural than that the husbandman should inaugurate the season with the worship of the deity to whom he ascribed the function of quickening the seed. Further, the orgiastic character of the festival is readily explained by the help of facts which met us in a former part of our investigation. We have seen that between the sower and the seed there is commonly supposed to exist a sympathetic connection of such a nature that his conduct directly affects and can promote or retard the growth of the crops. What wonder then if the simple husbandman imagined that by cramming his belly, by swilling and guzzling just before he proceeded to sow his fields, he thereby imparted additional vigour to the seed? But while his crude philosophy may thus have painted gluttony and intoxication in the agreeable colours of duties which he owed to himself, to his family, and to the commonwealth, it is possible that the zest with which he acquitted himself of his obligations may have been whetted by a less comfortable reflection. In modern times the indulgence of the Carnival is immediately followed by the abstinence of Lent; and if the Carnival is the direct descendant of the Saturnalia, may not Lent in like manner be merely the con-

¹ Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 12. 7; Solinus, i. 35, p. 13 ed. Mommsen (first edition); Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iii. 15. On the other hand, we know that the ceremony of renewing the laurels, which originally took place on the first of March, was long afterwards transferred to the first of January. See Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 135 *sqq.*, and Macro-

bis, *Saturn.* i. 12. 6, compared with *Geoponica*, xl. 2. 6, where the note of the commentator Niclas may be consulted. This transference is strictly analogous to the change which I conjecture to have been made in the date of celebrating the Saturnalia.

² See Palladius, *De re rustica*, books iii. and iv. *passim*.

tinuation, under a thin disguise, of a period of temperance which was annually observed, from superstitious motives, by Italian farmers long before the Christian era? Direct evidence of this, so far as I am aware, is not forthcoming; but we have seen that a practice of abstinence from fleshly lusts has been observed by various peoples as a sympathetic charm to foster the growth of the seed;¹ and such an observance would be an appropriate sequel to the Saturnalia, if that festival was indeed, as I conjecture it to have been, originally held in spring as a religious or magical preparation for sowing and planting. In Burma a similar fast, which a recent writer calls the Buddhist Lent, is observed for three months every year while the ploughing and sowing of the fields go forward; and the custom is believed to be far older than Buddhism, which has merely given it a superficial tinge like the veneer of Christianity which, if I am right, has overlaid an old heathen observance in Lent. This Burmese Lent, we are told, covers the rainy season from the full moon of July to the full moon of October. "This is the time to plough, this is the time to sow; on the villagers' exertions in these months depends all their maintenance for the rest of the year. Every man, every woman, every child, has hard work of some kind or another. And so, what with the difficulties of travelling, what with the work there is to do, and what with the custom of Lent, every one stays at home. It is the time for prayer, for fasting, for improving the soul. Many men during these months will live even as the monks live, will eat but before midday, will abstain from tobacco. There are no plays during Lent, and there are no marriages. It is the time for preparing the land for the crop; it is the time for preparing the soul for eternity. The congregations on the Sundays will be far greater at this time than at any other; there will be more thought of the serious things of life."²

Beyond the limits of Italy festivals of the same general character as the Saturnalia appear to have been held over a considerable area of the ancient world. A characteristic

¹ Above, vol. ii. p. 209 *sqq.*

² H. Fielding, *The Soul of a People* (London, 1898), p. 172 *sq.* The orthodox explanation of the custom is that during these three months the

Buddha retired to a monastery. But "the custom was far older even than that—so old that we do not know how it arose. Its origin is lost in the mists of far-away time."

feature of the Saturnalia, as we saw, was an inversion of social ranks, masters changing places with their slaves and waiting upon them, while slaves were indulged with a semblance not merely of freedom but even of power and office. In various parts of Greece the same hollow show of granting liberty to slaves was made at certain festivals. Thus at a Cretan festival of Hermes the servants feasted and their masters waited upon them. The Troezenians observed a certain solemnity lasting many days, on one of which the slaves played at dice with the citizens and were treated to a banquet by their lords. The Thessalians held a great festival called Peloria, which Baton of Sinope identified with the Saturnalia, and of which the antiquity is vouched for by a tradition that it originated with the Pelasgians. At this festival sacrifices were offered to Pelorian Zeus, tables splendidly adorned were set out, all strangers were invited to the feast, all prisoners released, and the slaves sat down to the banquet, enjoyed full freedom of speech, and were served by their masters.¹

But the Greek festival which appears to have corresponded most closely to the Italian Saturnalia was the Cronia or festival of Cronus, a god whose barbarous myth and cruel ritual clearly belong to a very early stratum of Greek religion, and who was by the unanimous voice of antiquity identified with Saturn. We are told that his festival was celebrated in most parts of Greece, but especially at Athens, where the old god and his wife Rhea had a shrine near the stately, but far more modern, temple of Olympian Zeus. A joyous feast, at which masters and slaves sat down together, formed a leading feature of the solemnity. At Athens the festival fell in the height of summer, on the twelfth day of the month Hecatombaëon, which answered nearly to July; and tradition ran that Cecrops, the first king of Attica, had founded an altar in honour of Cronus and Rhea, and had ordained that master and man should share a common meal when the harvest was got in.² Yet there are indications that at Athens the

¹ Athenaeus, xiv. pp. 639 B-640 A.

² Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 7. 37; *ib.* i. 10. 22; Demosthenes, *Or.* xxiv. 26, p. 708.

As to the temple of Cronus and Rhea, see Pausanias, i. 18. 7; Bekker's *Anecdota Graeca*, i. p. 273, line 20 sq.

Cronia may once have been a spring festival. For a cake with twelve knobs, which perhaps referred to the twelve months of the year, was offered to Cronus by the Athenians on the fifteenth day of the month Elaphebolion, which corresponded roughly to March,¹ and there are traces of a licence accorded to slaves at the Dionysiac festival of the opening of the wine-jars, which fell on the eleventh day of the preceding month Anthesterion.² At Olympia the festival of Cronus undoubtedly occurred in spring; for here a low but steep hill, now covered with a tangled growth of dark holly-oaks and firs, was sacred to him, and on its top certain men, who bore the title of kings, offered sacrifice to the old god at the vernal equinox in the Elean month Elaphius.³

In this last ceremony, which probably went on year by year long before the upstart Zeus had a temple built for himself at the foot of the hill, there are two points of special interest, first the date of the ceremony, and second the title of the celebrants. First, as to the date, the spring equinox, or the twenty-first of March, must have fallen so near the fifteenth day of the Athenian month Elaphebolion, that we may fairly ask whether the Athenian custom of offering a cake to Cronus on that day may not also have been an equinoctial ceremony. In the second place, the title of kings borne by the sacrificers suggests that they may have personated Cronus himself. For, like his Italian counterpart Saturn, the Greek Cronus was believed to have been a king who reigned in heaven or on earth during the blissful Golden Age, when men passed their days like gods without toil or sorrow, when life was a long round of festivity, and death came like sleep, sudden but gentle, announced by none of his sad forerunners, the ailments and infirmities of

¹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum*, iii. No. 77.

² Aug. Mommsen, *Heortologie*, p. 349, quoting Schol. on Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 370. "When the slaves," says Plutarch, "feast at the Cronia or go about celebrating the festival of Dionysus in the country, the shouts they raise and the tumult they make in their rude merriment are intolerable" (*Non posse suaviter vivi secundum*

Epicurum, 26). That the original festival of Cronus fell at Athens in Anthesterion is the view of Aug. Mommsen (*op. cit.* pp. 22, 79; *Die Feste der Stadt Athen*, p. 402).

³ Pausanias, vi. 20. 1. Compare Dionysius! Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* i. 34. The title of these men (*βασιλᾶς*) must undoubtedly be equivalent to kings (*βασιλεῖς*).

age.¹ Thus the analogy of the Olympian Cronia, probably one of the oldest of Greek festivals, to the Italian Saturnalia would be very close if originally, as I conjecture, the Saturnalia fell in spring and Saturn was personated at it, as we have good reason to believe, by a man dressed as a king. May we go a step further and suppose that, just as the man who acted King Saturn at the Saturnalia was formerly slain in that character, so one of the kings who celebrated the Cronia at Olympia not only played the part of Cronus, but was sacrificed, as god and victim in one, on the top of the hill? Cronus certainly bore a sinister reputation in antiquity. He passed for an unnatural parent who had devoured his own offspring, and he was regularly identified by the Greeks with the cruel Semitic Baals who delighted in the sacrifice of human victims, especially of children.² A legend which savours strongly of infant sacrifice is reported of a shrine that stood at the very foot of the god's own hill at Olympia;³ and a quite unambiguous story was told of the sacrifice of a babe to Lycaean Zeus on Mount Lycaeus in Arcadia, where the worship of Zeus was probably nothing but a continuation, under a new name, of the old worship of Cronus, and where human victims appear to have been regularly offered down to the Christian era.⁴ The Rhodians annually sacrificed a man to Cronus in the month Metageitnion; at a later time they kept a condemned criminal in prison till the festival of the Cronia was come, then led him forth outside the gates, made him drunk with wine, and cut his throat.⁵ With the parallel of the Saturnalia before our eyes, we may surmise that the victim who thus ended his life in a state of intoxication at the Cronia may perhaps have personated King Cronus himself, the god who reigned in the happy days of old when men had nothing to do but

¹ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 111, 169; Plato, *Politicus*, p. 269 A; Diodorus, iii. 61, v. 66; Julian, *Constitutionum*, p. 317 B D (pp. 407, 408 ed. Hertlein); "Anonymi Chronologica," printed in the Bonn edition of Malalas, p. 17. See further M. Mayer's article "Kronos," Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1458.

² See M. Mayer, *op. cit.* ii. 1501 sqq.

³ Pausanias, vi. 20. 4 sq.

⁴ Plato, *Republic*, ix. p. 565 D E; pseudo-Plato, *Minos*, p. 315 C; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 81; Pausanias, viii. 2 and 38; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 27; Augustine, *De civitate dei*, xviii. 17. The suggestion that Lycaean Zeus may have been merely a successor of Cronus is due to my friend Professor W. Ridgeway.

⁵ Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 54.

to eat and drink and make merry. At least the Rhodian custom lends some countenance to the conjecture that formerly a human victim may have figured at the sacrifice which the so-called kings offered to Cronus on his hill at Olympia. In this connection it is to be remembered that we have already found well-attested examples of a custom of sacrificing the scions of royal houses in ancient Greece.¹ If the god to whom, or perhaps rather in whose character, the princes were sacrificed, was Cronus, it would be natural that the Greeks of a later age should identify him with Baal or Moloch, to whom in like manner Semitic kings offered up their children. The Laphystian Zeus of Thessaly and Boeotia, like the Lycacan Zeus of Arcadia, was probably nothing but the aboriginal deity, commonly known as Cronus, whose gloomy rites the Greek invaders suffered the priests of the vanquished race to continue after the ancient manner, while they quieted their scruples of conscience or satisfied their pride as conquerors by investing the blood-thirsty old savage with the name, if not with the character, of their own milder deity, the humane and gracious Zeus.

When we pass from Europe to Asia Minor, from ancient Greece to ancient Babylon and the regions where Babylonian influence penetrated, we are still met with festivals which bear the closest resemblance to the oldest form of the Italian Saturnalia. The reader may remember the festival of the Sacaea, on which I had occasion to touch in an earlier part of this chapter.² It was held at Babylon during five days of the month Lous, beginning with the sixteenth day of the month. During its continuance, just as at the Saturnalia, masters and servants changed places, the servants issuing orders and the masters obeying them; and in each house one of the servants, dressed as a king and bearing the title of Zoganes, bore rule over the household. Further, just as at the Saturnalia in its original form a man was dressed as King Saturn in royal robes, allowed to indulge his passions and caprices to the full, and then put to death, so at the Sacaea a condemned prisoner, who probably also bore for the time being the title of Zoganes, was arrayed in the king's attire and suffered to play the despot,

¹ Above, vol. ii. p. 34 *sqq.*

² Vol. ii. p. 24 *sqq.*

to use the king's concubines, and to give himself up to feasting and debauchery without restraint, only however in the end to be stript of his borrowed finery, scourged, and hanged or crucified.¹ From Strabo we learn that this Asiatic counterpart of the Saturnalia was celebrated in Asia Minor wherever the worship of the Persian goddess Anaitis had established itself. He describes it as a Bacchic orgy, at which the revellers were disguised as Scythians, and men and women drank and dallied together by day and night.²

As the worship of Anaitis, though of Persian origin, appears to have been deeply leavened with coarse elements which it derived from the sensual religion of Babylon,³ we may perhaps regard Mesopotamia as the original home from which the Sacaeen festival spread westward into other parts of Asia Minor. Now the Sacaeen festival, described by the Babylonian priest Berosus in the first book of his history of Babylon, has been plausibly identified⁴ with the great Babylonian festival of the New Year called Zakmuk or Zagmuku which has become known to us in recent times through inscriptions. The Babylonian year began with the spring month of Nisan, which seems to have covered the second half of March and the first half of April. Thus the New Year festival, which occupied at least the first eleven days of Nisan, probably included the spring equinox. It was held in honour of Marduk or Merodach, the chief god of Babylon, whose great temple in the city formed the religious centre of the solemnity. For here, in a splendid chamber of the vast edifice, all the gods were believed to assemble at this season under the presidency of Marduk for the purpose of determining the fates for the new year, especially the fate of the king's life. The festival was of hoar antiquity, for it was known to Gudea, an old king of Southern Babylonia who flourished about three thousand years before the beginning of our era, and

¹ Athenaeus, xiv. p. 639c; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* iv. 69 sq. (vol. i. p. 76 ed. Dindorf). From Athenaeus we learn that the festival was described or mentioned by Berosus in his first book and by Ctesias in his second.

² Strabo, xi. 8. 5.

³ See Ed. Meyer's article "Anaitis," in Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, I. 330 sqq.

⁴ By Bruno Meissner, "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Purimfestes," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, I. (1896), pp. 296-301.

it is mentioned in an early account of the Great Flood. At a much later period it is repeatedly referred to by King Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. Nebuchadnezzar records how he built of bricks and bitumen a chapel or altar, "a thing of joy and rejoicing," for the great festival of Marduk, the lord of the gods; and we read of the rich and abundant offerings which were made by the high priest at this time.¹ Unfortunately the notices of this Babylonian festival of the New Year which have come down to us deal chiefly with its mythical aspect and throw little or no light on the mode of its celebration. Hence its identity with the Sacaea must remain for the present a more or less probable hypothesis. In favour of the hypothesis may be alleged in the first place the resemblance of the names Sacaea and Zoganes to Zakmuk or Zagmuku, and in the second place the very significant statement that the fate of the king's life was supposed to be determined by the gods, under the presidency of Marduk, at the Zakmuk or New Year's festival.² When we remember that the central feature of the Sacaea appears to have been the saving of the king's life for another year by the vicarious sacrifice of a criminal on the cross or the gallows, we can understand that the season was a critical one for the king, and may well have been regarded as determining his fate for the ensuing twelve months. A difficulty, however, in the way of identifying the Sacaea with the Zakmuk arises from the statement of Berosus that the Sacaea fell on the sixteenth day of Lous, which was the tenth month of the Syro-Macedonian calendar, and appears to have nearly coincided with July. Thus if the Sacaea occurred in July and the Zakmuk in March, the theory of their identity could not be maintained. But the identification of the months of the Syro-Macedonian calendar is a matter of some uncertainty; as to the month Lous in

¹ Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, p. 84 sqq.; H. Zimmern, "Zur Frage nach dem Ursprunge des Purimfestes," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, xi. (1891), p. 159 sqq.; A. Jeremias, s.v. "Marduk," *Roscher's Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2347 sq.; M. Jastrow, *Re-*

ligion of Babylonia and Assyria, pp. 186, 677 sqq. According to Jensen's transcription the name of the festival was Zakmuk; the other authorities referred to spell it Zagmuku.

² The statement occurs in an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar. See Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, p. 85.

particular the evidence of ancient writers appears to be conflicting,¹ and until we have ascertained beyond the reach of doubt when Lous fell at Babylon in the time of Berosus, it would be premature to allow much weight to the seeming discrepancy in the dates of the two festivals.

A fresh and powerful argument in favour of the identity of the two festivals is furnished by the connection which has been traced between both of them and the Jewish feast of Purim.² There are good grounds for believing that Purim was unknown to the Jews until after the exile and that they learned to observe it during their captivity in the East. The festival is first mentioned in the book of Esther, which, by the majority of critics is assigned to the fourth or third century B.C.,³ and which certainly cannot be older than the Persian period, since the scene of the narrative is laid in Susa at the court of a Persian king Ahasuerus, whose name appears to be the Hebrew equivalent of Xerxes. The next reference to Purim occurs in the second book of Maccabees, a work written probably about the beginning of our era.⁴ Thus from the absence of all notice of Purim in the older books of the Bible, we may fairly conclude that the festival was instituted or imported at a comparatively late date among the Jews. The same conclusion is supported by the book of Esther itself, which was manifestly written to explain the origin of the feast and to suggest motives for its observance. For, according to the author of the book, the festival was established to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from a great danger which threatened them in Persia under the reign of King Xerxes. Thus the opinion of modern scholars that the feast of Purim, as celebrated by the Jews, was of late date and oriental origin, is borne out by the tradition of the Jews themselves. An examination of that

¹ See article "Calendarium," in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*,³ i. 339; and above, vol. ii. p. 254, note 1.

² H. Zimmern, "Zur Frage nach dem Ursprunge des Purimfestes," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, xi. (1891), pp. 157-169; W. Nowack, *Lehrbuch der hebräischen Archäologie*, ii. 198 sqq.; Br. Meissner,

"Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Purimfestes," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, l. (1896), pp. 296-301; Fr. Cumont, "Le roi des Saurimales," *Revue de Philologie*, xxi. (1897), p. 150.

³ S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*,⁵ p. 452.

⁴ 2 Maccabees xv. 36. As to the date of this book, see Driver, *l.c.*

tradition and of the mode of celebrating the feast renders it probable that Purim is nothing but a more or less disguised form of the Babylonian festival of the Sacaea or Zakmuk.

In the first place, the feast of Purim was and is held on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, the last month of the Jewish year, which corresponds roughly to March.¹ Thus the date agrees nearly, though not exactly, with the date of the Babylonian Zakmuk, which fell a fortnight later in the early days of the following month Nisan. A trace of the original celebration of Purim in Nisan may perhaps be found in the statement that "they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman" in Nisan, the first month of the year.² It has been suggested with some plausibility that the Jews may have shifted the date of Purim in order that the new and foreign festival might not clash with their own old festival of the Passover, which began on the fourteenth day of Nisan. Another circumstance which speaks at once for the alien origin of Purim and for its identity with Zakmuk is its name. The author of the book of Esther derives the name Purim from *pur*, "a lot,"³ but no such word with this signification exists in Hebrew, and hence we are driven to look for the meaning and etymology of Purim in some other language. A specious theory is that the name was derived from an Assyrian word *pulru*, "an assembly," and referred primarily to the great assembly of the gods which, as we have seen, formed a chief feature of the festival of Zakmuk, and was held annually in the temple of Marduk at Babylon for the purpose of determining the fates or lots of the new year;⁴ the august assembly appears to have been occasionally, if not regularly, designated by the very name *pulru*.⁵ On this hypothesis the traditional Jewish explanation of the name Purim preserved a genuine

¹ We know from Josephus (*Antiquit.* iii. 10. 5) that in the month Nisan, the first month of the Jewish year, the sun was in Aries. Now the sun is in Aries from March 20th or 21st to April 19th or 20th; hence Nisan answers approximately to April, and Adar to March.

² Esther iii. 7.

³ Esther iii. 7, ix. 26.

⁴ This is the view of Zimmern (*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, xi. (1891), p. 157 sqq.), and it is favoured by Nowack (*Lehrbuch der hebräischen Archäologie*, ii. 198 sq.).

⁵ Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, p. 240 sq.

kernel of historical truth, or at least of mythical fancy, under the husk of a verbal error; for the name, if this derivation of it is correct, really signified not "the lots" but the assembly for drawing or otherwise determining the lots. Another explanation which has been offered is "that *pūr* or *būr* seems to be an old Assyrian word for 'stone,' and that therefore it is possible that the word was also used to signify 'lot,' like the Hebrew בִּזְרִי, 'lot,' which originally, no doubt, meant 'little stone.'"¹ Either of these explanations of the name Purim, by tracing it back to the New Year assembly of the gods at Babylon for settling the lots, furnishes an adequate explanation of the traditional association of Purim with the casting of lots—an association all the more remarkable and all the more likely to be ancient because there is nothing to justify it either in the Hebrew language or in the Jewish mode of celebrating the festival. When to this we add the joyous, nay, extravagant festivity which has always been characteristic of Purim and is entirely in keeping with a New Year celebration, we may perhaps be thought to have made out a fairly probable case for holding that the Jewish feast is derived from the Babylonian New Year festival of Zakmuk. Whether the Jews borrowed the feast directly from the Babylonians or indirectly through the Persian conquerors of Babylon is a question which deserves to be considered; but the Persian colouring of the book of Esther speaks strongly for the view that Purim came to Israel by way of Persia, and this view is confirmed by other evidence, to which I shall have to ask the reader's attention a little later on.

If the links which bind Purim to Zakmuk are reasonably strong, the chain of evidence which connects the Jewish festival with the Sacaea is much stronger. Nor is this surprising when we remember that, while the popular mode of celebrating Zakmuk is unknown, we possess important and trustworthy details as to the manner of holding the Sacaea. We have seen that the Sacaea was a wild Bac-

¹ The explanation is that of Jensen, quoted by Nöldeke in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, s.v. "Esther." In Greek, for a similar reason, the word for "pebble" and "vote" is identical

(ψῆφος). I desire to thank the editors of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* for their courtesy in allowing me to see Professor Nöldeke's article in proof.

chanalian revel at which men and women disguised themselves and drank and played together in a fashion that was more gay than modest. Now this is, or used to be, precisely the nature of Purim. The two days of the festival, according to the author of the book of Esther, were to be kept for ever as "days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor."¹ And this joyous character the festival seems always to have retained. The author of a tract in the Talmud lays it down as a rule that at the feast of Purim every Jew is bound to drink until he cannot distinguish between the words "Cursed be Haman" and "Blessed be Mordecai"; and he tells how on one occasion a certain Rabba drank so deep at Purim that he murdered a rabbi without knowing what he was about. Indeed Purim has been described as the Jewish Bacchanalia, and we are told that at this season everything is lawful which can contribute to the mirth and gaiety of the festival.² Writers of the seventeenth century assert that during the two days and especially on the evening of the second day the Jews did nothing but feast and drink to repletion, play, dance, sing, and make merry; in particular they disguised themselves, men and women exchanging clothes, and thus attired ran about like mad, in open defiance of the Mosaic law, which expressly forbids men to dress as women and women as men.³ Among the Jews of Frankfort, who inhabited the squalid but quaint and picturesque old street known as the Judengasse which many of us still remember, the revelry at Purim ran as high as ever in the eighteenth century. The gluttony and intoxication began punctually at three o'clock in the afternoon of the first day and went on until the whole community seemed to have taken leave of their senses. They ate and drank, they frolicked and cut capers, they reeled and staggered about, they shrieked, yelled, stamped, clattered, and broke

¹ Esther x. 22.

² Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica* (Bale, 1661), pp. 554 sq., 559 sq.

³ Buxtorf, *op. cit.* p. 559; Schickard, quoted by Lagarde, "Purim," p. 54 sq., *Abhandlungen der kön.*

Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, xxxiv. (1887). Compare Bodenschatz, *Kirchliche Verfassung der heutigen Juden* (Erlangen, 1748), ii. 256. For the rule forbidding men and women to exchange garments, see Deuteronomy xxii. 5.

each other's heads with wooden hammers till the blood flowed. On the evening of the first day the women were allowed, as a special favour, to open their latticed window and look into the men's synagogue, because the great deliverance of the Jews from their enemies in the time of King Ahasuerus was said to have been effected by a woman. A feature of the festival which should not be overlooked was the acting of the story of Esther as a comedy, in which Esther, Ahasuerus, Haman, Mordecai, and others played their parts after a fashion that sometimes degenerated from farce into ribaldry.¹ Thus on the whole we may take it that Purim has always been a Saturnalia and therefore corresponds in character to the Sacaea, as that festival has been described for us by Strabo.

But further, when we examine the narrative which professes to account for the institution of Purim, we discover in it not only the strongest traces of Babylonian origin, but also certain singular analogies to those very features of the Sacaeian festival with which we are here more immediately concerned. The book of Esther turns upon the fortunes of two men, the vizier Haman and the despised Jew Mordecai, at the court of a Persian king. Mordecai, we are told, had given mortal offence to the vizier, who accordingly prepares a tall gallows on which he hopes to see his enemy hanged, while he himself expects to receive the highest mark of the king's favour by being allowed to wear the royal crown and the royal robes and thus attired to parade the streets, mounted on the king's own horse and attended by one of the noblest princes, who should proclaim to the multitude his temporary exaltation and glory. But the artful intrigues of the wicked vizier miscarried and resulted in precisely the opposite of what he had hoped and expected; for the royal honours which he had looked for fell to his rival Mordecai, and he himself was hanged on the gallows which he had made ready for his foe. In this story we seem to detect a reminiscence, more or less confused, of the Zoganes of the Sacaea,

¹ J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten* (Frankfort and Leipsic, 1714), ii. Theil, pp. *309, *314, *316, iv. Theil, die ii. Continuation, p. 347: J. Abraham, *Jewish Life in the Middle*

Ages (London, 1896), p. 261 *seq.* I have to thank my learned friend Dr. S. Schechter for bringing both these works to my notice.

in other words, of the custom of investing a private man with the insignia of royalty for a few days and then putting him to death on the gallows or the cross. It is true that in the narrative the part of the Zoganes is divided between two actors, one of whom hopes to play the king but is hanged instead, while the other acts the royal part and escapes the gallows to which he was destined by his enemy. But this bisection, so to say, of the Zoganes may have been deliberately invented by the Jewish author of the book of Esther for the sake of setting the origin of Purim, which it was his purpose to explain, in a light that should reflect glory on his own nation. Or, perhaps more probably, it points back to a custom of appointing two mock kings at the Sacaea, one of whom was put to death at the end of the festival, while the other was allowed to go free, at least for a time. We shall be the more inclined to adopt the latter hypothesis when we observe that corresponding to the two rival aspirants to the temporary kingship there appear in the Jewish narrative two rival queens, Vashti and Esther, one of whom succeeds to the high estate from which the other has fallen. Further, it is to be noted that Mordecai, the successful candidate for the mock kingship, and Esther, the successful candidate for the queenship, are linked together by close ties both of interest and blood, the two being said to be cousins. This suggests that in the original story or the original custom there may have figured two pairs of kings and queens, of whom one pair is represented in the Jewish narrative by Mordecai and Esther and the other by Haman and Vashti.

A strong confirmation of this view is furnished by a philological analysis of the names of the four personages. It seems to be now generally recognised by Biblical scholars that the name Mordecai, which has no meaning in Hebrew, is nothing but a slightly altered form of Marduk or Merodach, the name of the chief god of Babylon, whose great festival was the Zakmuk; and further, it is generally admitted that Esther in like manner is equivalent to Ishtar, the great Babylonian goddess whom the Greeks called Astarte and who is more familiar to English readers as Ashtaroth. The derivation of the names of Haman and Vashti is less certain,

but some high authorities are disposed to accept the view of Jensen that Haman is identical with Humman or Homman, the national god of the Elamites, and that Vashti is in like manner an Elamite deity, probably a goddess whose name appears in inscriptions. Now, when we consider that the Elamites were from time immemorial the hereditary foes of the Babylonians and had their capital at Susa, the very place in which the scene of the book of Esther is laid, we can hardly deny the plausibility of the theory that Haman and Vashti on the one side and Mordecai and Esther on the other represent the antagonism between the gods of Elam and the gods of Babylon, and the final victory of the Babylonian deities in the very capital of their rivals.¹ "It is therefore possible," says Professor Nöldeke, "that we have here to do with a feast whereby the Babylonians commemorated a victory gained by their gods over the gods of their neighbours the Elamites, against whom they had so often waged war. The Jewish feast of Purim is an annual merrymaking of a wholly secular kind, and it is known that there were similar feasts among the Babylonians. That the Jews in Babylonia should have adopted a festival of this sort cannot be deemed improbable, since in modern Germany, to cite an analogous case, many Jews celebrate Christmas after the manner of their Christian fellow-countrymen, in so far at least as it is a secular institution."²

Thus if we are right in tracing the origin of Purim to the Babylonian Sacaea and in finding the counterpart of the Zoganes in Haman and Mordecai, it would appear that the

¹ 1. Jensen, "Elamitische Eigenname," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vi. (1892), pp. 47-70; compare *ib.* pp. 209-212. All Jensen's etymologies are accepted by W. Nowack (*Lehrbuch der hebräischen Archäologie*, ii. 199 *sq.*); H. Gunkel (*Schöpfung und Chaos*, Göttingen, 1895, p. 310 *sq.*); D. G. Wildeboer (in his commentary on Esther, p. 173 *sq.*, forming part of K. Marti's *Kurzer Hand. Commentar zum alten Testament*, Freiburg i. B. 1898); and Th. Nöldeke (*s.v.* "Esther," *Encyclopædia Biblica*). On the other hand, Br. Meissner (*Zeitschrift der deutschen*

morgenländischen Gesellschaft, i. (1896), p. 301) and M. Jastrow (*The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 686, note 2) suspend their judgment as to the identification of Haman and Vashti with Elamite deities, though they apparently regard the identification of Mordecai and Esther with Marduk and Ishtar as quite certain. H. Zimmern also accepts as unquestionable the derivation of Mordecai from Marduk (*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, xi. (1891), p. 167).

² Th. Nöldeke, *s.v.* "Esther," *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

Zoganes during his five days of office personated not merely a king but a god, whether that god was the Elamite Humman, the Babylonian Marduk, or some other deity not yet identified. The union of the divine and royal characters in a single person is so common that we need not be surprised at meeting with it in ancient Babylon. And the view that the mock king of the Sacaea died as a god on the cross or the gallows is no novelty. The acute and learned Movers long ago observed that "we should be overlooking the religious significance of oriental festivals and the connection of the Sacaea with the worship of Anaitis, if we were to treat as a mere jest the custom of disguising a slave as a king. We may take it for certain that with the royal dignity the king of the Sacaea assumed also the character of an oriental ruler as representative of the divinity, and that when he took his pleasure among the women of the king's harem, he played the part of Sandan or Sardanapalus himself. For according to ancient oriental ideas the use of the king's concubines constituted a claim to the throne, and we know from Dio that the 'five-days' king received full power over the harem. Perhaps he began his reign by publicly cohabiting with the king's concubines, just as Absalom went in to his father's concubines in a tent spread on the roof of the palace before all Israel, for the purpose of thereby making known and strengthening his claim to the throne."¹ Whatever may be thought of this latter conjecture, there can be no doubt that Movers is right in laying great stress both on the permission given to the mock king to invade the real king's harem, and on the intimate connection of the Sacaea with the worship of Anaitis. That connection is vouched for by Strabo, and when we consider that in Strabo's time the cult of the old Persian goddess Anaitis was thoroughly saturated with Babylonian elements and had practically merged in the sensual worship of the Babylonian Ishtar or Astarte,² we shall incline to view with favour Movers's further

¹ Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 490 sq.; 2 Samuel xvi. 21 sq., compare xii. 8. For other examples of the use of the king's concubines by claimants to the throne, Movers refers to Herodotus, iii. 68; Josephus, *Contra Apion*, i. 15.

² Ed. Meyer, s.v. "Anaitis," Roscher's *Lexikon*, i. 352 sq. At the temple of Anaitis in Acclisena, a city of Armenia, the daughters of the noblest families regularly prostituted themselves for a long time before marriage

conjecture, that a female slave may have been appointed to play the divine queen to the part of the divine king supported by the Zoganes, and that reminiscences of such a queen have survived in the myth or legend of Semiramis. According to tradition, Semiramis was a fair courtesan beloved by the king of Assyria, who took her to wife. She won the king's heart so far that she persuaded him to yield up to her the kingdom for five days, and having assumed the sceptre and the royal robes she made a great banquet on the first day, but on the second day she shut up her husband in prison or put him to death and thenceforward reigned alone.¹ Taken with Strabo's evidence as to the association of the Sacaea with the worship of Anaitis, this tradition seems clearly to point to a custom of giving the Zoganes, during his five-days' reign, a queen who represented the goddess Anaitis or Semiramis or Astarte, in short the great Asiatic goddess of love and fertility, by whatever name she was called. For that in Eastern legend Semiramis was a goddess and a form of Astarte has been made practically certain by the researches of Robertson Smith, who has further shown that the worship of Anaitis is not only modelled on Astarte worship in general, but corresponds to that particular type of it which was specially associated with the name of Semiramis.² The identity of Anaitis and Semiramis is clearly proved by the circumstance that the great sanctuary of Anaitis at Zela in Pontus was actually built upon a mound of Semiramis; probably the old worship of the Semitic goddess always continued here even after her Semitic name of Semiramis or Astarte had been exchanged for the Persian name of

(Strabo, xii. 14. 16). Agathias identified Anaitis with Aphrodite (*Hist.* ii. 24), and when the Greeks spoke of the Oriental Aphrodite, they meant Astarte or one of her equivalents. Jensen proposes to identify Anaitis with an Elamite goddess Nahunt, whom he takes to have been equivalent to Ishtar or Astarte, especially in her quality of the Evening Star. See his article, "Elamitische Eigennamen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vi. (1892), pp. 64-67, 70.

¹ Diodorus, ii. 20; Aelian, *Var.*

Hist. vii. 1.

² W. Robertson Smith, "Ctesias and the Semiramis Legend," *English Historical Review*, April 1887. Amongst other evidence, Smith refers to Diodorus, from whose account (ii. 4) of the birth of Semiramis he infers that she "is the daughter of Derceto, the fish goddess of Ascalon, and is herself the Astarte whose sacred doves were honoured at Ascalon and throughout Syria."

³ Strabo, xii. 3. 37, compare xi. 8. 4.

Anaitis, perhaps in obedience to a decree of the Persian king Artaxerxes II., who first spread the worship of Anaitis in the west of Asia.¹ It is highly significant, not only that the Sacaeen festival was held at this ancient seat of the worship of Semiramis or Astarte; but further, that the whole city of Zela was formerly inhabited by sacred slaves and harlots, ruled over by a supreme pontiff, who administered it as a sanctuary rather than as a city.² Formerly, we may suppose, this priestly king himself died a violent death at the Sacaea in the character of the divine lover of Semiramis, while the part of the goddess was played by one of the sacred prostitutes. The probability of this is greatly strengthened by the existence of the so-called mound of Semiramis under the sanctuary. For the mounds of Semiramis, which were pointed out all over Western Asia,³ were said to have been the graves of her lovers whom she buried alive.⁴ The tradition ran that the great and lustful queen Semiramis, fearing to contract a lawful marriage lest her husband should deprive her of power, admitted to her bed the handsomest of her soldiers, only, however, to destroy them all afterwards.⁵ Now this tradition is one of the surest indications of the identity of Semiramis with the Babylonian goddess Ishtar or Astarte. For the famous Babylonian epic which recounts the deeds of the hero Gilgamesh tells how, when he clothed himself in royal robes and put his crown on his head, the goddess Ishtar was smitten with love of him and wooed him to be her mate. But Gilgamesh rejected her insidious advances, for he knew the sad fate that had overtaken all her lovers, and he reproached the cruel goddess, saying:

“Tammuz, the consort of thy youth,
Thou causest to weep every year.
The bright-coloured *uliallu* bird thou didst love.

¹ Berosus, cited by Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* v. 65, p. 57 ed. Potter (where for *Tavatōs* we should read *Avatridos*, as is done by C. Müller, *Frag. Histor. Graec.* ii. 509).

² Strabo, xii. 3. 37. The nature of the *lepidoulai* at Zela is indicated by Strabo in the preceding section (36), where he describes a similar state of things at Comana, a city not far from

Zela. His words are *πλήθος γυναικῶν τῶν ἐργαζομένων ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος, ὡς αἱ πλείους ἐστὶν λέπαι*.

³ Strabo, xvi. i. 2; Diodorus, ii. 14.

⁴ Ctesias, cited by John of Antioch (Müller's *Frag. Histor. Graec.* iv. 539).

⁵ Diodorus, ii. 13. Note that the first husband of Semiramis is said to have hanged himself (Diodorus, ii. 6).

Thou didst crush him and break his pinions,
 In the woods he stands and laments, 'O my pinions !'
 Thou didst love a lion of perfect strength,
 Seven and seven times thou didst bury him in the corners.
 Thou didst love a horse superior in the fray,
 With whip and spur thou didst urge him on.
 Thou didst force him on for seven double hours,
 Thou didst force him on when wearied and thirsty ;
 His mother Silili thou madest weep.
 Thou didst also love a shepherd of the flock,
 Who continually poured out for thee the libation,
 And daily slaughtered kids for thee ;
 But thou didst smite him, and didst change him into a leopard,
 So that his own sheep-boy hunted him,
 And his own hounds tore him to pieces."

The hero also tells the miserable end of a gardener in the service of the goddess's father. The hapless swain had once been honoured with the love of the goddess, but when she tired of him she changed him into a cripple so that he could not rise from his bed. Therefore Gilgamesh fears to share the fate of all her former lovers and spurns her proffered favours.¹ But it is not merely that the myth of Ishtar thus tallies with the legend of Semiramis ; the worship of the goddess was marked by a profligacy which has found its echo in the loose character ascribed by tradition to the queen. Inscriptions, which confirm and supplement the evidence of Herodotus, inform us that Ishtar was served by harlots of three different classes all dedicated to her worship. Indeed, there is reason to think that these women personated the goddess herself, since one of the names given to them is applied also to her.²

Thus we can hardly doubt that Semiramis is substantially a form of Ishtar or Astarte, the great Semitic goddess of love and fertility ; and if this is so, we may assume with at least a fair degree of probability that the high pontiff of Zela or his deputy, who played the king of the Sacaea at

¹ A. Jeremias, *Izdubar-Nimrod*, p. 23 sqq. ; M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 482 ; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 159 sqq. The true name of the Babylonian hero, which used to be read as Izdubar, has been found to be Gilgamesh (Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 468).

² Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 59 sq. ; M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 475 sq., 484 sq. ; Herodotus, i. 199. The name which Herodotus gives to the goddess is Mylitta, but this is only a corruption of Baalat or Belit, one of the titles of Ishtar. See E. Meyer, article "Astarte," Roscher's *Lexikon*, i. 648.

the sanctuary of Semiramis, perished as one of the unhappy lovers of the goddess, perhaps as Tammuz, whom she caused "to weep every year." When he had run his brief meteoric career of pleasure and glory, his bones would be laid in the great mound which covered the mouldering remains of many mortal gods, his predecessors, whom the goddess had honoured with her fatal love.

Here then at the great sanctuary of the goddess in Zela it appears that her myth was regularly translated into action; the story of her love and the death of her divine lover was performed year by year as a sort of mystery-play by men and women who lived for a season and sometimes died in the character of the visionary beings whom they personated. The intention of these sacred dramas, we may be sure, was neither to amuse nor to instruct an idle audience, and as little were they designed to gratify the actors, to whose baser passions they gave the reins for a time. They were solemn rites which mimicked the doings of divine beings, because man fancied that by such mimicry he was able to arrogate to himself the divine functions and to exercise them for the good of his fellows. The operations of nature, to his thinking, were carried on by mythical personages very like himself; and if he could only assimilate himself to them completely he would be able to wield all their powers. This is probably the original motive of most religious dramas or mysteries among rude peoples.¹ The dramas are played, the mysteries are performed, not to teach the spectators the doctrines of their creed, still less to entertain them, but for the purpose of bringing about those natural effects which they represent in mythical disguise; in a word, they are magical ceremonies and their mode of operation is mimicry

¹ The elaborate masked dances given by some of the coast Indians of British Columbia are dramatised myths, in which the actors personate spirits and legendary animals. The dramas are performed only in winter, because it is only then that the spirits are present. See Fr. Boas, "The social organisation and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U. S. National Museum for 1895*, pp. 396,

420 sq.; 637 sq., 651; *id.*, in *Tenth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 52 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1895*). With regard, for example, to the Bella Coola tribe we are told that "the masks used in the dances represent mythical personages, and the dances are pantomimic representations of myths." This was precisely the origin of the drama in Greece.

or sympathy. We shall probably not err in assuming that many myths, which we now know only as myths, had once their counterpart in magic; in other words, that they used to be acted as a means of producing in fact the events which they describe in figurative language. Ceremonies often die out while myths survive, and thus we are left to infer the dead ceremony from the living myth. If myths are, in a sense, the reflections or shadows of men cast upon the clouds, we may say that these reflections continue to be visible in the sky and to inform us of the doings of the men who cast them, long after the men themselves are not only beyond our range of vision but sunk beneath the horizon.

When once we perceive that the gods and goddesses, the heroes and heroines of mythology have been represented officially, so to say, by a long succession of living men and women who bore the names and were supposed to exercise the functions of these fabulous creatures, we have attained a point of vantage from which it seems possible to propose terms of peace between two rival schools of mythologists who have been waging fierce war on each other for ages. On the one hand it has been argued that mythical beings are nothing but personifications of natural objects and natural processes; on the other hand, it has been maintained that they are nothing but notable men and women who in their lifetime, for one reason or another, made a great impression on their fellows, but whose doings have been distorted and exaggerated by a false and credulous tradition. These two views, it is now easy to see, are not so mutually exclusive as their supporters have imagined. The personages about whom all the marvels of mythology have been told may have been real human beings, as the Euhemerists allege; and yet they may have been at the same time personifications of natural objects or processes, as the adversaries of Euhemerism assert. The doctrine of incarnation supplies the missing link that was needed to unite the two seemingly inconsistent theories. If the powers of nature or a certain department of nature be conceived as personified in a deity, and that deity can become incarnate in a man or woman, it is obvious that the incarnate deity is at the same time a real human being and a personification of nature. To take the

instance with which we are here concerned, Semiramis may have been the great Semitic goddess of love, Ishtar or Astarte, and yet she may be supposed to have been incarnate in a series of real women, whether queens or harlots, whose memory survives in ancient history. Saturn, again, may have been the god of sowing and planting, and yet may have been represented on earth by a succession or dynasty of sacred kings, whose gay but short lives may have contributed to build up the legend of the Golden Age. The longer the series of such human divinities, the greater, obviously, the chance of their myth or legend surviving; and when moreover a deity of a uniform type was represented, whether under the same name or not, over a great extent of country by many local dynasties of divine men or women, it is clear that the stories about him would tend still further to persist and be stereotyped.

The conclusions which we have reached in regard to the legend of Semiramis and her lovers probably holds good of all the similar tales that were current in antiquity throughout the East; in particular, it may be assumed to apply to the myths of Aphrodite and Adonis in Syria, of Cybele and Attis in Phrygia, and of Isis and Osiris in Egypt. If we could trace these stories back to their origin, we might find that in every case a human couple acted year by year the parts of the loving goddess and the dying god. We know that down to Roman times Attis was personated by priests who bore his name;¹ and if within the period of which we have knowledge the dead Attis and the dead Adonis were represented only by effigies, we may surmise that it had not always been so, and that in both cases the dead god was once represented by a dead man. Further, the licence accorded to the man who played the dying god at the Sacaea speaks strongly in favour of the hypothesis that before the incarnate deity was put to a public death he was in all cases allowed or rather required to enjoy the embraces of a woman who played the goddess of love. The reason for such an enforced union of the human god and goddess is not hard to divine. If primitive man believes that the growth of the crops can be stimulated by the intercourse of

¹ See vol. ii. p. 134.

common men and women,¹ what showers of blessings will he not anticipate from the commerce of a pair whom his fancy invests with all the dignity and powers of deities of fertility?

Thus the theory of Movers, that at the Sacaea the Zoganes represented a god and paired with a woman who personated a goddess, turns out to rest on deeper and wider foundations than that able scholar was aware of. He thought that the divine couple who figured by deputy at the ceremony were Semiramis, and Sandan or Sardanapalus. It now appears that he was substantially right as to the goddess; but we have still to inquire into the god. There seems to be no doubt that the name Sardanapalus is only the Greek way of representing Ashurbanapal, the name of the greatest and nearly the last king of Assyria. But the records of the real monarch which have come to light within recent years give little support to the fables that attached to his name in classical tradition. For they prove that, far from being the effeminate weakling he seemed to the Greeks of a later age, he was a warlike and enlightened monarch, who carried the arms of Assyria to distant lands and fostered at home the growth of science and letters.² Still, though the historical reality of King Ashurbanapal is as well attested as that of Alexander or Charlemagne, it would be no wonder if myths gathered, like clouds, round the great figure that loomed large in the stormy sunset of Assyrian glory. Now the two features that stand out most prominently in the legends of Sardanapalus are his extravagant debauchery and his violent death in the flames of a great pyre, on which he burned himself and his concubines to save them from falling into the hands of his victorious enemies. It is said that the womanish king, with painted face and arrayed in female attire, passed his days in the seclusion of the harem, spinning purple wool among his concubines and wallowing in sensual delights; and that in the epitaph which he caused to be carved on his tomb he recorded that all the days of his life he ate and drank and toyed, remember-

¹ See vol. ii. p. 204 sqq.

Assyrische Geschichte, p. 351 sqq. 1
M. JASTROW, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 43.

² See C. P. Tiele, *Babylonisch-*

ing that life is short and full of trouble, that fortune is uncertain, and that others would soon enjoy the good things which he must leave behind.¹ These traits bear little resemblance to the portrait of Ashurbanapal either in life or death; for after a brilliant career of conquest the Assyrian king died in old age, at the height of human ambition, with peace at home and triumph abroad, the admiration of his subjects and the terror of his foes. But if the traditional characteristics of Sardanapalus harmonise but ill with what we know of the real monarch of that name, they fit well enough with all that we know or can conjecture of the mock kings who led a short life and a merry during the revelry of the *Sacaea*, the Asiatic equivalent of the *Saturnalia*. We can hardly doubt that for the most part such men, with death staring them in the face at the end of a few days, sought to drown care and deaden fear by plunging madly into all the fleeting joys that still offered themselves under the sun. When their brief pleasures and sharp sufferings were over, and their bones or ashes mingled with the dust, what more natural that on their tomb—those mounds in which the people saw, not untruly, the graves of the lovers of Semiramis—there should be carved some such lines as those which tradition placed in the mouth of the great Assyrian king, to remind the heedless passer-by of the shortness and vanity of life?

When we turn to Sandan, the other legendary or mythical being whom Movers thought that the *Zoganes* may have personated, we find the arguments in support of his theory still stronger. The city of Tarsus in Cilicia is said to have been founded by a certain Sandan whom the Greeks identified with *Hercules*; and at the festival of this god or hero an effigy of him was burned on a great pyre.² This Sandan is

¹ *Athenaeus*, xli. pp. 528 r. 530 c.; *Diodorus Siculus*, li. 23 and 27; *Justin*, l. 3. Several different versions of the king's epitaph have come down to us. I have followed the version of *Chorilus*, the original of which is said to have been carved in Chaldean letters on a tombstone that surmounted a great barrow at Nineveh. This barrow may, as I suggest in the text, have been one of the so-called mounds of Semiramis.

² *Ammianus Marcellinus*, xiv. 8; *Dio Chrysostom*, *Or.* xxxiii. p. 408 (vol. ii. p. 16 ed. Dindorf). Coins of Tarsus exhibit the effigy on the pyre, which seems to be composed of a pyramid of great beams resting on a cubical base. See K. O. Müller, "Sandon und Sardanapal," *Kunstarchäologische Werke*, iii. 8 sqq., whose valuable essay I follow.

doubtless the same with the Sandes whom Agathias calls the old Persian Hercules. Professing to give a list of the gods whom the Persians worshipped before the days of Zoroaster, the Byzantine historian mentions Bel, Sandes, and Anaitis, whom he identifies with Zeus, Hercules, and Aphrodite respectively.¹ As we know that Bel was a Babylonian, not a Persian deity, and that in later times Anaitis was practically equivalent to the Babylonian Ishtar or Astarte, a strong presumption is raised that Sandes also was a Babylonian or at all events Semitic deity, and that in speaking of him as Persian the historian confused the ancient Persians with the Babylonians and perhaps other stocks of Western Asia. The presumption is strengthened when we find that in Lydia the surname of Sandon, doubtless equivalent to Sandan, is said to have been borne by Hercules because he wore a woman's garment called a *sandyx*, fine and diaphanous as gossamer, at the bidding of Queen Omphale, whom the hero served for three years in the guise of a 'female slave, clad in purple, humbly carding wool and submitting to be slapped by the saucy queen with her golden slipper.'² The familiar legend that Hercules burned himself alive on a great pyre completes the parallel between the effeminate Hercules Sandon of Lydia and the Assyrian Sardanapalus. So exact a parallel must surely rest on a common base of custom as well as of myth. That base, according to the conjecture of the admirable scholar K. O. Müller, may have been a custom of dressing up an effigy of an effeminate Asiatic deity in the semblance of a reveller, and then publicly burning it on a pyre. Such a custom appears to have prevailed not only at Tarsus in Cilicia, but also in Lydia; for a coin of the Lydian Philadelphia, a city which lay not far from the old royal capital Sardes, exhibits a device like that on coins of Tarsus, consisting of a figure stretched on a pyre. "We may suppose," says Müller, "that in the old Assyrian mythology a certain being called Sandan, or perhaps Sardan, figured beside Baal and Mylitta or Astarte. The character of this mythical personage is one which often meets us in oriental religion—the extreme of voluptuousness

¹ Agathias, *Hist.* ii. 24.

² Johannes Lydus, *De magistratibus*,

iii. 64; Apollodorus, ii. 6. 2 sq.;

Lucian, *Dial. deorum*, xiii. 2.

and sensuality combined with miraculous force and heroic strength. We may imagine that at the great festivals of Nineveh this Sandan or Sardan was exhibited as a buxom figure with womanish features, the pale face painted with white lead, the eyebrows and eyelashes blackened with kohl, his person loaded with golden chains, rings, and earrings, arrayed in a bright red transparent garment, grasping a goblet in one hand and perhaps, as a symbol of strength, a double axe in the other, while he sat cross-legged and surrounded by women on a splendidly adorned couch under a purple canopy, altogether not unlike the figure of Adonis at the court festivals of Alexandria. Then the people of 'mad Nineveh,' as the poet Phocylides called it, 'the well-favoured harlot,' as the prophet Nahum has it, would rejoice and make merry with this their darling hero. Afterwards there may have been another show, when this gorgeous Sandan or Sardan was to be seen on a huge pyre of precious wood, draped in gold-embroidered tapestry and laden with incense and spices of every sort, which being set on fire, to the howling of a countless multitude and the deafening din of shrill music, sent up a monstrous pillar of fire whirling towards heaven and flooded half Nineveh with smoke and smell."¹

The distinguished scholar whom I have just quoted does not fail to recognise the part which imagination plays in the picture he has set before us; but he reminds us very properly that in historical inquiries imagination must always supply the bond that links together the broken fragments of tradition. One thing, he thinks, emerges clearly from the present investigation, the worship and legend of an effeminate hero like Sandan appear to have spread, by means of an early diffusion of the Semitic stock, first to the neighbourhood of Tarsus in Cilicia and afterwards to Sardes in Lydia. In favour of the former prevalence of the rite in Lydia it may be added that the oldest dynasty of Lydian kings traced their descent, not only from the mythical Assyrian hero

¹ K. O. Müller, "Sandon und Sardanapal," *Kunstarchäologische Werke*, iii. 16 sq. The writer adds that there is authority for every stroke in the picture. His principal source is the sixty-second speech of Dio Chrysostom (vol.

ii. p. 202 ed. Dindorf), where the unmanly Sardanapalus, seated cross-legged on a gilded couch with purple hangings, is compared to "the Adonis for whom the women wait."

Ninus, but also from the Greek hero Hercules,¹ whose legendary death in the fire finds at least a curious echo in the story that Croesus, the last king of Lydia, was laid by his Persian conqueror Cyrus on a great pyre of wood, and was only saved at the last moment from being consumed in the flames.² May not this story embody a reminiscence of the manner in which the ancient kings of Lydia, as living embodiments of their god, formerly met their end? It was thus, as we have seen, that the old Prussian rulers used to burn themselves alive in front of the sacred oak;³ and by an odd coincidence, if it is nothing more, the Greek Hercules directed that the pyre on which he was to be consumed should be made of the wood of the oak and the wild olive.⁴ Some grounds have also been shown for thinking that in certain South African tribes the chiefs may formerly have been burnt alive as a religious or magical ceremony.⁵ All these facts and indications tend to support the view of Movers that at the Sacaea also the man who played the god for five days was originally burnt at the end of them.⁶ Death by hanging or crucifixion may have been a later mitigation of his sufferings, though it is quite possible that both forms of execution or rather of sacrifice may have been combined by hanging or crucifying the victim first and burning him afterwards, much as our forefathers used to disembowel traitors after suspending them for a few minutes on a gibbet. At Tarsus apparently the custom was still further softened by burning an effigy instead of a man; but on this point the evidence is not explicit. It is worth observing that as late

¹ Herodotus, i. 7.

² Herodotus, i. 86, with Bähr's note.

³ See above, vol. ii. p. 13.

⁴ Sophocles, *Trachiniae*, 1195 sqq.:

πολλὰ μὲν ἔλην τῇ παθεραίσου δαυὶς
κείραντα πολλὰ δ' ἄρσεν ἐκτεμνόνθ' ὁμοῦ
ἀγρίων ὄλων, ὥμα τοῦμιν ἐμβαλεῖν.

The passage was pointed out to me by my friend Dr. A. W. Verrall. The poet's language suggests that of old a sacred fire was kindled by the friction of oak and wild olive wood, and that in accordance with a notion common among rude peoples, one of the pieces of wood (in this case the wild olive) was

regarded as male and the other (the oak) as female. On this hypothesis, the fire was kindled by drilling a hole in a piece of oak with a stick of wild olive. As to the different sorts of wood used by the ancients in making fire by friction, see A. Kuhn, *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks*,² p. 35 sqq. We have seen that in South Africa a special fire is procured for sacrifices by the friction of two pieces of the *Uzunté* tree, which are known respectively as husband and wife (vol. ii. p. 326).

² See above, vol. ii. p. 328.

³ Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 496.

as Lucian's time the principal festival of the year at Hierapolis—the great seat of the worship of Astarte—fell at the beginning of spring and took its name of the Pyre or the Torch from the tall masts which were burnt in the court of the temple with sheep, goats, and other animals hanging from them.¹ Here the season, the fire, and the gallows-tree all fit our hypothesis; only the man-god is wanting.

If the Jewish festival of Purim was, as I have attempted to show, directly descended either from the Sacaea or from some other Semitic festival, of which the central feature was the sacrifice of a man in the character of a god, we should expect to find traces of human sacrifice lingering about it in one or other of those mitigated forms to which I have just referred. This expectation is fully borne out by the facts. For from an early time it has been customary with the Jews at the feast of Purim to burn or otherwise destroy effigies of Haman, whose original character as a deity has recently been made probable by the researches of Jensen. The practice was well known under the Roman empire, for the emperors Honorius and Theodosius issued a decree commanding the governors of the provinces to take care that the Jews should not burn effigies of Haman on a cross at one of their festivals.² We learn from the decree that the custom gave great offence to the Christians, who regarded it as a blasphemous parody of the central mystery of their own religion, little suspecting that it was nothing but a continuation, in a milder form, of a rite that had probably been celebrated in the East long ages before the birth of Christ. The Arab historian Albirûnî, who wrote in the year 1000 A.D., informs us that at Purim the Jews of his time rejoiced greatly over the death of Haman, and that they made figures which they beat and burned, "imitating the burning of Haman." Hence one name for the festival was Hamân-Sûr.³ Another Arabic writer, Makrizî, who died in

¹ Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 49.

² Codex Theodosianus, Lib. xvi. Tit. viii. § 8: "*Judeos quodam festini-
tatis suae sollemni Aman ad poenae
quondam recordationem incendere, et
sanctae crucis adsimulatam speciem in
contemptu Christianae fidei sacrilega
mente exurere provinciarum rectores*

*prohibeant: ne locis suis fidei nostrae
signum immiserant, sed ritus suos infra
contemptum Christianae legis retineant:
amissuri sine dubio permissi hactenus,
nisi ab infidelis imperaverint.*" The
decree is dated at Constantinople, in
the consulship of Bassus and Philip.

³ Albirûnî, *The Chronology of Ancient*

1442 A.D., says that at the feast of Purim, which fell on the fifteenth day of the month Adar, some of the Jews used to make effigies of Haman which they first played with and then threw into the fire.¹ During the Middle Ages the Italian Jews celebrated Purim in a lively fashion which has been compared by their own historians to that of the Carnival. The children used to range themselves in rows opposite each other and pelt one another with nuts, while grown-up people rode on horseback through the streets with pine branches in their hands or blew trumpets and made merry round a puppet representing Haman, which was set on a platform or scaffold and then solemnly burnt on a pyre.² In the eighteenth century the Jews of Frankfort used at Purim to make pyramids of thin wax candles, which they set on fire; also they fashioned images of Haman and his wife out of candles and burned them on the reading-desk in the synagogue.³

Now, when we consider the close correspondence in character as well as in date between the Jewish Purim and the Christian Carnival, and remember further that the effigy of Carnival, which is now destroyed at this merry season, had probably its prototype in a living man who was put to a violent death in the character of Saturn at the Saturnalia, analogy of itself would suggest that in former times the Jews, like the Babylonians, from whom they appear to have derived their Purim, may at one time have burned, hanged, or crucified a real man in the character of Haman. There are some positive grounds for thinking that this was so. The early church historian Socrates informs us that at Inmestar, a town in Syria, the Jews were wont to observe certain sports among themselves, in the course of which they played many foolish pranks. In the year 416 A.D., being heated with wine, they carried these sports further than usual and began deriding Christians and even Christ himself, and to give the

Nations, translated and edited by Dr. C. Edward Sachau (London, 1879), p. 253 sq.

¹ Quoted by Lagarde, "Purim," p. 13 (*Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, xxxiv. 1887).

² M. Gildemann, *Geschichte der Erziehungswesen und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden*, ii. 211 sq.; I. Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* (London, 1896), p. 260 sq.

³ J. J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, ii. Theil, p. *309.

more zest to their mockery they seized a Christian child, bound him to a cross, and hung him up. At first they only laughed and jeered at him, but soon, their passions getting the better of them, they ill-treated the child so that he died under their hands. The thing got noised abroad, and resulted in a serious brawl between the Jews and their Christian neighbours. The authorities then stepped in, and the Jews had to pay dear for the crime they had perpetrated in sport.¹ The Christian historian does not mention, and perhaps did not know, the name of the drunken and jovial festival which ended so tragically; but we can hardly doubt that it was Purim, and that the boy who died on the cross represented Haman.² In mediæval and modern times many accusations of ritual murders, as they are called, have been brought against the Jews, and the arguments for and against the charge have been discussed on both sides with a heat which, however natural, has tended rather to inflame the passions of the disputants than to elicit the truth.³ Into this troubled arena I prefer not to enter; I will only observe that, so far as I have looked into the alleged cases, and these are reported in sufficient detail, the majority of the victims are said to have been children and to have met their fate in spring, often in the week before Easter. This last circumstance points, if there is any truth in the accusations, to a connection of the human sacrifice with the Passover, which falls in this week, rather than with Purim, which falls a month earlier. Indeed it has often been made a part of the accusation that the blood of the youthful victims was intended to be used at the Passover. Now if we bear in mind the strong grounds which exist for believing that the great

¹ Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vii. 16; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. Classen, vol. i. p. 129. Theophanes places the event in the year 408 A.D. From a note in Migne's edition of Socrates, I learn that in the Alexandrian calendar, which Theophanes used, the year 408 corresponded to the year which in our reckoning began on the first of September 415. Hence if the murder was perpetrated in spring at Purim it must have taken place in 416.

² This is the view of Graetz

(*Geschichte der Juden*,³ iv. 393 sq.) and Dr. M. R. James (*Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich* (Cambridge, 1896), by A. Jessopp and M. R. James, p. lxiii. sq.).

³ For an examination of some of these reported murders, see M. R. James, *op. cit.* p. lxii. sqg.; 11 L. Strack, *Das Blut im Glauben und Aberglauben der Menschheit* (Munich, 1900), p. 121 sqg. Both writers incline to dismiss the charges as groundless.

feature of the original Passover was the sacrifice of the first-born children,¹ we may hesitate to dismiss as idle calumnies all the charges of ritual murder which have been brought against the Jews in modern times. The extraordinary tenacity of life exhibited by the lowest forms of superstition in the minds of ignorant people, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, is familiar to all students of popular religion; and there would be no reason for surprise if among the most degraded part of the Jewish community there should be from time to time a recrudescence of primitive barbarity. To make the Jewish community as a whole responsible for outrages which, if they occur at all, are doubtless quite as repugnant to them as they are to every humane mind, would be the height of injustice; it would be as fair to charge Christians in general with complicity in the incalculably greater number of massacres and atrocities of every kind that have been perpetrated by Christians in the name of Christianity, not merely on Jews and heathen, but on men and women and children who professed—and died for—the same faith as their torturers and murderers. If deeds of the sort alleged have been really done by Jews—a question on which I must decline to pronounce an opinion—they would interest the student of custom as isolated instances of reversion to an old and barbarous ritual which once flourished commonly enough among the ancestors both of Jews and Gentiles, but on which, as on a noxious monster, an enlightened humanity has long set its heel. Such customs die hard; it is not the fault of society as a whole if sometimes the reptile has strength enough left to lift its venomous head and sting.

But between the stage when human sacrifice goes on unabashed in the light of common day, and the stage when it has been driven out of sight into dark holes and corners, there intervenes a period during which the custom is slowly dwindling away under the growing light of knowledge and philanthropy. In this middle period many subterfuges are resorted to for the sake of preserving the old ritual in a form which will not offend the new morality. A common and successful device is to consummate the sacrifice on the person

¹ See above, vol. ii. p. 47 *sqq.*

of a malefactor, whose death at the altar or elsewhere is little likely to excite pity or indignation, since it partakes of the character of a punishment, and people recognise that if the miscreant had not been dealt with by the priest, it would have been needful in the public interest to hand him over to the executioner. We have seen that in the Rhodian sacrifices to Cronus a condemned criminal was after a time substituted for an innocent victim ; and there can be little doubt that at Babylon the criminals, who perished in the character of gods at the Sacaea, enjoyed an honour which, at an earlier period, had been reserved for more respectable persons. It seems therefore by no means impossible that the Jews, in borrowing the Sacaea from Babylon under the new name of Purim, should have borrowed along with it the custom of putting to death a malefactor who, after masquerading as Mordecai in a crown and royal robe, was hanged or crucified in the character of Haman. There are some grounds for thinking that this or something of this sort was done ; but a consideration of them had better be deferred till we have cleared up some points which still remain obscure in Purim, and in the account which the Jews give of its origin.

In the first place, then, it deserves to be remarked that the joyous festival of Purim on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar is invariably preceded by a fast, known as the fast of Esther, on the thirteenth ; indeed, some Jews fast for several days before Purim.¹ In the book of Esther the fast is traditionally explained as a commemoration of the mourning and lamentation excited among the Jews by the decree of King Ahasuerus that they should all be massacred on the thirteenth day of the month Adar ; for "in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting and weeping, and wailing ; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes." And Esther, before she went into the presence of the king to plead for the lives of her people, "bade them return answer unto Mordecai, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day : I also

¹ Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica*, cap. *Verfassung der heutigen Juden*, ii. 253 xxix. p. 554 ; Bodenschatz, *Kirchliche* *sg.*

and my maidens will fast in like manner." Hence fasting and lamentation were ordained as the proper preparation for the happy feast of Purim which commemorated the great deliverance of the Jews from the destruction that had threatened them on the thirtieth day of Adar.¹ Now we have seen that, in the opinion of some of the best modern scholars, the basis of the book of Esther is not history but a Babylonian myth, which celebrated the triumph of the Babylonian deities over the gods of their enemies. On this hypothesis, how is the fast that precedes Purim to be explained? The best solution appears to be that of Jensen, that the fasting and mourning were originally for the supposed annual death of a Semitic god or hero of the type of Tammuz or Adonis, whose resurrection on the following day occasioned that outburst of joy and gladness which is characteristic of Purim. The particular god or hero, whose death and resurrection thus touched with sorrow and filled with joy the hearts of his worshippers, may have been, according to Jensen, either the great hero Gilgamesh, or his comrade and friend Eabani.² The doughty deeds and adventures of this mighty pair are the theme of the longest Babylonian poem that has been as yet discovered. It is recorded on twelve tablets, and this circumstance has suggested to some scholars the view that the story may be a solar myth, descriptive of the sun's annual course through the twelve months or the twelve signs of the zodiac. However this may be, the scene of the poem is laid chiefly at the very ancient Babylonian city of Erech, the chief seat of the worship of the goddess Ishtar or Astarte, who plays an important part in the story. For the goddess is said to have been smitten with the charms of Gilgamesh, and to have made love to him; but he spurned her proffered favours, and thereafter fell into a sore sickness, probably through the wrath of the offended goddess. His comrade Eabani also roused the fury of Ishtar, and was wounded to death. For twelve days he lingered on a bed of pain, and, when he died,

¹ Esther iv. 3 and 16, ix. 31.

² So far as I know, Professor Jensen has not yet published his theory, but he has stated it in letters to correspondents. See Nowack, *Lehrbuch der hebräischen Archäologie*, ii. 200;

Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, p. 311 sqq.; Wildeboer, in his commentary on Esther, p. 174 sq. (*Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament*, herausgegeben von D. K. Marti, Lieferung 6).

his friend Gilgamesh mourned and lamented for him, and rested not until he had prevailed on the god of the dead to suffer the spirit of Eabani to return to the upper world. The resurrection of Eabani, recorded on the twelfth tablet, forms the conclusion of the long poem.¹ Jensen's theory is that the death and resurrection of a mythical being, who combined in himself the features of a solar god and an ancient king of Erech, were celebrated at the Babylonian Zakmuk or festival of the New Year, and that the transference of the drama from Erech, its original seat, to Babylon led naturally to the substitution of Marduk, the great god of Babylon, for Gilgamesh or Eabani in the part of the hero. Although Jensen apparently does not identify the Zakmuk with the Sacaea, a little consideration will show how well his general theory of Zakmuk fits in with those features of the Sacaeen festival which have emerged in the course of our inquiry. At the Sacaeen festival, if I am right, a man, who personated a god or hero of the type of Tammuz or Adonis, enjoyed the favours of a woman, probably a sacred harlot, who represented the great Semitic goddess Ishtar or Astarte; and after he had thus done his part towards securing, by means of sympathetic magic, the revival of plant life in spring, he was put to death. We may suppose that the death of this divine man was mourned over by his worshippers, and especially by women, in much the same fashion as the women of Jerusalem wept for Tammuz at the gate of the temple,² and as Syrian damsels mourned the dead Adonis, while the river ran red with his blood. Such rites appear, in fact, to have been common all over Western Asia; the particular name of the dying god varied in different places, but in substance the

¹ M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 471 sq., 475 sq., 481-486, 510-512; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 146 sqq. Mr. Jastrow points out that though a relation cannot be traced between each of the tablets of the poem and the corresponding month of the year, such a relation appears undoubtedly to exist between some of the tablets and the months. Thus, for example, the sixth tablet describes the affection of Ishtar for Gilgamesh, and the visit which she

paid to Anu, her father in heaven, to complain of the hero's contemptuous rejection of her love. Now the sixth Babylonian month was called the "Mission of Ishtar," and in it was held the festival of Tammuz, the hapless lover of the goddess. Again, the story of the great flood is told in the eleventh tablet, and the eleventh month was called the "month of rain." See Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 484, 510.

² Ezekiel viii. 14.

ritual was the same. Fundamentally, the custom was a religious or rather magical ceremony intended to ensure the revival and reproduction of life in spring.

Now, if this interpretation of the *Sacaea* is correct, it is obvious that one important feature of the ceremony is wanting in the brief notices of the festival that have come down to us. The death of the man-god at the festival is recorded, but nothing is said of his resurrection. Yet if he really personated a being of the *Adonis* or *Attis* type, we may feel pretty sure that his dramatic death was followed at a shorter or longer interval by his dramatic revival, just as at the festivals of *Attis* and *Adonis* the resurrection of the dead god quickly succeeded to his mimic death.¹ Here, however, a difficulty presents itself. At the *Sacaea* the man-god died a real, not a mere mimic death; and in ordinary life the resurrection even of a man-god is at least not an everyday occurrence. What was to be done? The man, or rather the god, was undoubtedly dead. How was he to come to life again? Obviously the best, if not the only way, was to set another and living man to support the character of the reviving god, and we may conjecture that this was done. We may suppose that the insignia of royalty which had adorned the dead man were transferred to his successor, who, arrayed in them, would be presented to his rejoicing worshippers as their god come to life again; and by his side would probably be displayed a woman in the character of his divine consort, the goddess *Ishtar* or *Astarte*. In favour of this hypothesis it may be observed that it at once furnishes a clear and intelligible explanation of a remarkable feature in the book of *Esther* which has not yet, so far as I am aware, been adequately elucidated; I mean that apparent duplication of the principal characters to which I have already directed the reader's attention. If I am right, *Haman* represents the temporary king or mortal god who was put to death at the *Sacaea*; and his rival *Mordecai* represents the other temporary king who, on the death of his predecessor, was invested with his royal insignia, and exhibited to the people as the god come to life again. Similarly *Vashti*, the deposed queen in the narrative, corresponds to the woman who

¹ See vol. ii. pp. 116, 132.

played the part of queen and goddess to the first mock king, the Haman or Humman; and her successful rival, Esther or Ishtar, answers to the woman who figured as the divine consort of the second mock king, the Mordecai or Marduk. A trace of the sexual licence accorded to the mock king of the festival seems to be preserved in the statement that King Ahasuerus found Haman fallen on the bed with Esther and asked, "Will he even force the queen before me in the house?"¹ We have seen that the mock king of the Sacaea did actually possess the right of using the real king's concubines, and there is much to be said for the view of Movers that he began his short reign by exercising the right in public.² In the parallel ritual of Adonis the marriage of the goddess with her ill-fated lover was publicly celebrated the day before his mimic death.³ A clear reminiscence of the time when the relation between Esther and Mordecai was conceived as much more intimate than mere cousinship appears to be preserved in some of the Jewish plays acted at Purim, in which Mordecai appears as the lover of Esther; and this significant indication is confirmed by the teaching of the Rabbis that King Ahasuerus never really knew Esther, but that a phantom in her likeness lay with him while the real Esther sat on the lap of Mordecai.⁴ Another recommendation of the theory which I venture to propound is that it suggests an obvious and plausible reason for the Elamite names attached to two of the principal characters in the book of Esther, the discarded queen Vashti and the unhappy vizier Haman. If at the New Year festival in Babylon the divine drama was played by two pairs of mock kings and queens, of whom one pair came to a miserable end, while the other pair triumphed before the people arrayed in all the mimic pomp of their predecessors, it would be natural enough that in time an unfavourable comparison should be drawn between the two pairs, and that people, forgetting their real meaning and religious identity, should see in their apparent opposition a victory of the gods of Babylon over the gods of their eternal

¹ Esther vii. 8.

² See above, p. 160.

³ Above, vol. ii. p. 116.

⁴ J. J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, ii. Theil, p. *316.

foes the Elamites. Hence while the happy pair retained their Babylonian names of Marduk and Ishtar, the unhappy pair, who were originally nothing but Marduk and Ishtar in a different aspect, were renamed after the hated Elamite deities Humman and Vashti.

The Persian setting, in which the Hebrew author of the book of Esther has framed his highly-coloured picture, naturally suggests that the Jews derived their feast of Purim not directly from the old Babylonians, but from their Persian conquerors. Even if this could be demonstrated, it would in no way invalidate the theory that Purim originated in the Babylonian festival of the Sacaea, since we know that the Sacaea was celebrated by the Persians.¹ Hence it becomes worth while to inquire whether in the Persian religion we can detect any traces of a festival akin to the Sacaea or Purim. Here Lagarde has shown the way by directing attention to the old Persian ceremony known as the "Ride of the Beardless One."² This was a rite performed both in Persia and Babylonia at the beginning of spring, on the first day of the first month, which in the most ancient Persian calendar corresponded to March, so that the date of the ceremony agrees with that of the Babylonian New Year festival of Zakmuk. A beardless and, if possible, one-eyed buffoon was set naked on an ass, a horse, or a mule, and conducted in a sort of mock triumph through the streets of the city. In one hand he held a crow and in the other a fan, with which he fanned himself, complaining of the heat, while the people pelted him with ice and snow and drenched him with cold water. He was supposed to drive away the cold, and perhaps to aid him in discharging this useful function he was fed with hot food, and hot stuffs were smeared on his body. Riding on his ass and attended by all the king's household, if the city happened to be the capital, or, if it was not, by all the

¹ Dio Chrysostom makes Diogenes say to Alexander the Great, οὐκ ἐννοήσας τὴν τῶν Σακίων ἑορτήν, ἢ Πέρσαι ἄγουσιν (*Or.* iv. vol. i. p. 76 ed. Dindorf). The festival was mentioned by Ctesias in the second book of his Persian history (Athenaeus, xiv. p. 639 c); and down to the time of Strabo

it was associated with the nominal worship of the Persian goddess Anaitis (Strabo, xi. §. 4 and 5).

² Lagarde, "Purim," p. 51 sqq. (*Abhandlungen der königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, xxxiv. 1887).

retainers of the governor, who were also mounted, he paraded the streets and extorted contributions. He stopped at the doors of the rich, and if they did not give him what he asked for, he befouled their garments with mud or a mixture of red ochre and water, which he carried in an earthenware pot. If a shopkeeper hesitated a moment to respond to his demands, the importunate beggar had the right to confiscate all the goods in the shop; so the tradesmen who saw him bearing down on them, not unnaturally hastened to anticipate his wants by contributing of their substance before he could board them. Everything that he thus collected from break of day to the time of morning prayers belonged to the king or governor of the city; but everything that he laid hands on between the first and the second hour of prayer he kept for himself. After the second prayers he disappeared, and if the people caught him later in the day they were free to beat him to their heart's content. "In like manner," proceeds one of the native writers who has described the custom, "people at the present time appoint a New Year Lord and make merry. And this they do because the season, which is the beginning of Azur or March, coincides with the sun's entry into Aries, for on that day they disport themselves and rejoice because the winter is over."¹

Now in this harlequin, who rode through the streets attended by all the king's men, and levying contributions which went either to the royal treasury or to the pocket of the collector, we recognise the familiar features of the mock or temporary king, who is invested for a short time with the pomp and privileges of royalty for reasons which have been already explained.² The abrupt disappearance of the Persian clown at a certain hour of the day, coupled with the leave given to the populace to thrash him if they found him afterwards, points plainly enough to the harder fate that probably awaited him in former days, when he paid with his life for his brief tenure of a kingly crown. The resemblance between his burlesque progress and that of Mordecai through the streets of Susa is obvious; though

¹ Th. Hyde, *Historia religionis veterum Persarum* (Oxford, 1700), pp. 183, 249-251.

² See especially, vol. ii. p. 26 *sqq.*

the Jewish author of *Esther* has depicted in brighter colours the pomp of his hero "in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a robe of fine linen and purple," riding the king's own charger, and led through the city by one of the king's most noble princes.¹ The difference between the two scenes is probably not to be explained simply by the desire of the Jewish writer to shed a halo of glory round the personage whom he regarded as the deliverer of his people. So long as the temporary king was a real substitute for the reigning monarch, and had to die sooner or later in his stead, it was natural that he should be treated with a greater show of deference, and should simulate his royal brother more closely than a clown, who had nothing worse than a beating to fear when he laid down his office. In short, after the serious meaning of the custom had been forgotten, and the substitute was allowed to escape with his life, the high tragedy of the ancient ceremony would rapidly degenerate into farce.

But while the "*Ride of the Beardless One*" is, from one point of view, a degenerate copy of the original, regarded from another point of view, it preserves some features which are almost certainly primitive, though they do not appear in the kindred Babylonian and Jewish festivals. The Persian custom bears the stamp of a popular festivity rather than of a state ceremonial, and everywhere it seems as if popular festivals, when left to propagate themselves freely among the folk, reveal their old meaning and intention more transparently than when they have been adopted into the official religion and enshrined in a ritual. The simple thoughts of our simple forefathers are better understood by their unlettered descendants than by the majority of educated people; their rude rites are more faithfully preserved and more truly interpreted by a rude peasantry than by the priest, who wraps up their nakedness in the gorgeous pall of religious pomp, or by the philosopher, who dissolves their crudities into the thin air of allegory. In the present instance the purpose of the "*Ride of the Beardless One*" at the beginning of spring is sufficiently obvious; it was meant to hasten the departure of winter and the approach

¹ *Esther* vi. 8 sq., viii. 15.

of summer. We are expressly told that the clown who went about fanning himself and complaining of the heat, while the populace snowballed him, was supposed to dispel the cold; and even without any such assurance we should be justified in inferring as much from his behaviour. On the principles of sympathetic magic, which is little more than an elaborate system of make-believe, you can make the weather warm by pretending that it is so; or if you cannot, you may be sure that there is some wiser person than yourself who can. Such a wizard, in the estimation of the Persians, was the beardless one-eyed man who went through the performance I have described; and no doubt his physical defects were believed to contribute in some occult manner to the success of the rite. The ceremony was thus, as Lagarde acutely perceived, the oriental equivalent of those popular European customs which celebrate the advent of spring by representing in a dramatic form the expulsion or defeat of winter by the victorious summer.¹ But whereas in Europe the two rival seasons are often, if not regularly, personated by two actors or two effigies, in Persia a single actor sufficed. Whether he definitely represented winter or summer is not quite clear; but his pretence of suffering from heat, and his final disappearance suggest that, if he personified either of the seasons, it was the departing winter rather than the coming summer.

If there is any truth in the connection thus traced between Purim and the "Ride of the Beardless One," we are now in a position to finally unmask the leading personages in the book of Esther. I have attempted to show that Haman and Vashti are little more than doubles of Mordecai and Esther, who in turn conceal under a thin disguise the features of Marduk and Ishtar, the great god and goddess of Babylon. But why, the reader may ask, should the divine pair be thus duplicated and the two pairs set in opposition to each other? The answer is suggested by the popular European celebrations of spring to which I have just adverted. If my interpretation of these customs is right, the contrast between the summer and winter, or the life and death which figure in effigy, or in the persons of

¹ See above, vol. ii. p. 99 *sqq.*

living representatives at the spring ceremonies of our peasantry, is fundamentally a contrast between the dying or dead vegetation of the old, and the sprouting vegetation of the new year—a contrast, I may add, which would lose nothing of its point when, as in ancient Rome and Babylon and Persia, the beginning of spring was also the beginning of the new year. In these and in all the ceremonies we have been examining the antagonism is not between powers of a different order, but between the same power viewed in different aspects as old and young; it is in short nothing but the eternal and pathetic contrast between youth and age. And as the power or spirit of vegetation is represented in religious ritual and popular custom by a human pair, whether they be called Ishtar and Tammuz, or Venus and Adonis, or the Queen and King of May, so we may expect to find the old decrepit spirit of the past year personated by one pair, and the fresh young spirit of the new year by another. This, if my hypothesis is right, is the ultimate explanation of the struggle between Haman and Vashti on the one side, and their doubles Mordecai and Esther on the other. In the last analysis both pairs stood for the powers that make for the fertility of plants and perhaps also of animals; but the one pair embodied the failing energies of the past, and the other the vigorous and growing energies of the coming year. Both powers, on my hypothesis, were personified not merely in myth, but in custom; for year by year a human couple undertook to quicken the life of nature by a union in which, as in a microcosm, the loves of tree and plant, of herb and flower, of bird and beast were supposed in some mystic fashion to be summed up. Originally, we may conjecture, such couples exercised their functions for a whole year, on the conclusion of which the male partner—the divine king—was put to death; but in historical times it seems that, as a rule, the human god—the Saturn, Zoganes, Tammuz, or whatever he was called—enjoyed his divine privileges, and discharged his divine duties only for a short part of the year. This curtailment of his reign on earth was probably introduced at the time when the old hereditary divinities or deified kings contrived to shift the most painful part of their

duties to a substitute, whether that substitute was a son or a slave or a malefactor. Having to die as a king, it was necessary that the substitute should also live as a king for a season; but the real monarch would naturally restrict within the narrowest limits both of time and of power a reign which, so long as it lasted, necessarily, encroached upon and indeed superseded his own. What became of the divine king's female partner, the human goddess who shared his bed and transmitted his beneficent energies to the rest of nature, we cannot say. So far as I am aware, there is no evidence either in custom or in myth that she like him suffered death when her primary function was discharged. The nature of maternity suggests an obvious reason for sparing her a little longer, till that mysterious law, which links together woman's life with the changing aspects of the nightly sky, had been fulfilled by the birth of an infant god, who should in his turn, reared perhaps by her tender care, grow up to live and die for the world.

An eminent scholar has recently pointed out the remarkable resemblance between the treatment of Christ by the Roman soldiers at Jerusalem and the treatment of the mock king of the Saturnalia by the Roman soldiers at Durostolum; and he would explain the similarity by supposing that the soldiers ridiculed the claims of Christ to a divine kingdom by arraying him in the familiar garb of old King Saturn, whose quaint person figured so prominently at the winter revels.¹ Even if the theory should prove to be right, we can hardly suppose that Christ played the part of the regular Saturn of the year, since at the beginning of our era the Saturnalia fell at midwinter, whereas Christ was crucified at the Passover in spring. There is, indeed, as I have pointed out, some reason to think that when the Roman year began in March the Saturnalia was held in spring, and that in remote districts the festival always continued to be celebrated at the ancient date. If the Roman garrison of Jerusalem conformed to the old fashion in this respect, it seems not quite impossible that their celebration of the Saturnalia may have coincided with the Passover;

¹ P. Wendland, "Jesus als Saturnalien-König," *Hermes*, xxxiii. (1898), pp. 175-179.

and that thus Christ, as a condemned criminal, may have been given up to them to make sport with as the Saturn of the year. But on the other hand it is rather unlikely that the officers, as representatives of the State, would have allowed their men to hold the festival at any but the official date; even in the distant town of Durostolum we saw that the Roman soldiers celebrated the Saturnalia in December. Thus if the legionaries at Jerusalem really intended to mock Christ by treating him like the bulesque king of the Saturnalia, they probably did so only by way of a jest which was in more senses than one unseasonable.

But closely as the passion of Christ resembles the treatment of the mock king of the Saturnalia, it resembles still more closely the treatment of the mock king of the Sacaea.¹ The description of the mockery by St. Matthew is the fullest. It runs thus: "Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."² Compare with this the treatment of the mock king of the Sacaea, as it is described by Dio Chrysostom: "They take one of the prisoners condemned to death and seat him upon the king's throne, and give him the king's raiment, and let him lord it and drink and run riot and use the king's concubines during these days, and no man prevents him from doing just what he likes. But afterwards they strip and scourge and crucify him."³ Now it is quite possible that this remarkable resemblance is after all a mere coincidence, and that Christ was executed in the ordinary

¹ The resemblance had struck me when I wrote this book originally, but as I could not definitely explain it I preferred to leave it unnoticed.

² Matthew xxvii. 26-31. Mark's description (xv 15-20) is nearly identical.

³ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* iv. vol. i. p. 76 ed. Dindorf. As I have already mentioned, the Greek word which describes the execution (*ερεμνασαι*) leaves it uncertain whether the man was crucified or hanged.

way as a common malefactor; but on the other hand there are so many scattered hints and indications of something unusual, so many broken lines seemingly converging towards the cross on Calvary, that it is worth while to follow them up and see where they lead us. In attempting to draw these fragmentary data together, to bridge the chasms, and to restore the shattered whole, we must beware of mistaking hypothesis for the facts which it only professes to cement; yet even if our hypothesis should be thought to bear a somewhat undue proportion to the facts, the excess may perhaps be overlooked in consideration of the obscurity and the importance of the inquiry.

We have seen reason to think that the Jewish festival of Purim is a continuation, under a changed name, of the Babylonian Sacaea, and that in celebrating it by the destruction of an effigy of Haman the modern Jews have kept up a reminiscence of the ancient custom of crucifying or hanging a man in the character of a god at the festival. Is it not possible that at an earlier time they may, like the Babylonians themselves, have regularly compelled a condemned criminal to play the tragic part, and that Christ thus perished in the character of Haman? The resemblance between the hanged Haman and the crucified Christ struck the early Christians themselves; and whenever the Jews destroyed an effigy of Haman they were accused by their Christian neighbours of deriding the most sacred mystery of the new faith.¹ It is probable that on this painful subject the Christians were too sensitive; remembering the manner of their Founder's death it was natural that they should wince at any pointed allusion to a cross, a gallows, or a public execution, even when the shaft was not aimed at them. An objection to supposing that Christ died as the Haman of the year is that according to the Gospel narrative the crucifixion occurred at the Passover, on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, whereas the feast of Purim, at which the hanging of Haman would naturally take place, fell exactly a month earlier, namely, on the fourteenth day of the month Adar. I have no wish to blink or extenuate the serious nature of the difficulty arising from this discrepancy of dates, but I

¹ See above, p. 172.

would suggest some considerations which may make us hesitate to decide that the discrepancy is fatal. In the first place, it is possible, though perhaps not probable, that Christian tradition shifted the date of the crucifixion by a month in order to make the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God coincide with that annual sacrifice of the Passover lamb which in the belief of pious hearts had so long foreshadowed it and was thenceforth to cease. Instances of gentle pressure brought to bear, for purposes of edification, on stubborn facts are perhaps not wholly unknown in the annals of religion. But the express testimony of history is never to be lightly set aside; and in the investigation of its problems a solution which assumes the veracity and accuracy of the historian is, on an even balance of probabilities, always to be preferred to one which impugns them both. Now in the present case we have seen reason to think that the Babylonian New Year festival, of which Purim was a continuation, did fall in Nisan at or near the time of the Passover, and that when the Jews borrowed the festival they altered the date from Nisan to Adar in order to prevent the new feast from clashing with the old Passover. A reminiscence of the original date of Purim perhaps survives, as I have already pointed out, in the statement in the book of Esther that Haman caused *pur* or lots to be cast before him from the month of Nisan onward.¹ It thus seems not impossible that occasionally, for some special reason, the Jews should have celebrated the feast of Purim, or at least the death of Haman, at or about the time of the Passover. But there is another possibility which, remote and fanciful as it may appear, deserves at least to be mentioned. The mock king of the Saturnalia, whose resemblance to the dying Christ was first pointed out by Mr. Wendland, was allowed a period of licence of thirty days before he was put to death. If we could suppose that in like manner the Jews spared the human representative of Haman for one month from Purim, the date of his execution would fall exactly on the Passover. Which, if any, of these conjectural solutions of the difficulty is the true one, I will not undertake to say. I am fully conscious of the doubt and uncertainty that hang round the whole subject; and if

¹ Esther iii. 7.

in this and what follows I throw out some hints and suggestions, it is more in the hope of stimulating and directing further inquiry than with any expectation of reaching definite conclusions.

It may be objected that the mockery of Christ was done not by the Jews but by the Roman soldiers, who knew and cared nothing about Haman; how then can we suppose that the purple or scarlet robe, the sceptre of reed, and the crown of thorns, which the soldiers thrust upon Christ, were the regular insignia of the Haman of the year? To this we may reply, in the first place, that even if the legions stationed in Syria were not recruited in the country, they may have contracted some of the native superstitions and have fallen in with the local customs. This is not an idle conjecture. We know that the third legion during its stay in Syria learned the Syrian custom of saluting the rising sun, and that this formal salute, performed by the whole regiment as one man at a critical moment of the great battle of Bedriacum, actually helped to turn the scale when the fortune of empire hung trembling in the balance.¹ But it is not necessary to suppose that the garrison of Jerusalem really shared the beliefs and prejudices of the mob whom they overawed; soldiers everywhere are ready to go with a crowd bent on sport, without asking any curious questions as to the history or quality of the entertainment, and we should probably do the humanity of Roman soldiers too much honour if we imagined that they would be deterred by any qualm of conscience from joining in the pastime, which is still so popular, of baiting a Jew to death. But in the second place it should be observed that according to one of the Evangelists it was not the soldiers of Pilate who mocked Jesus, but the soldiers of Herod,² and we may fairly assume that Herod's guards were Jews.

The hypothesis that the crucifixion with all its cruel mockery was not a punishment specially devised for Christ, but was merely the fate that annually befell the malefactor who played Haman, appears to go some way towards relieving the Gospel narrative of certain difficulties which otherwise beset it. If, as we read in the Gospels, Pilate was really

¹ Tacitus, *Hist.* iii. 24 sq., compared with li. 74.

² Luke xxiii. 11.

anxious to save the innocent man whose fine bearing seems to have struck him, what was to hinder him from doing so? He had the power of life and death; why should he not have exercised it on the side of mercy, if his own judgment inclined that way? His reluctant acquiescence in the importunate demand of the rabble becomes easier to understand if we assume that custom obliged him annually at this season to give up to them a prisoner on whom they might play their cruel pranks. On this assumption Pilate had no power to prevent the sacrifice; the most he could do was to choose the victim.

Again, consider the remarkable statement of the Evangelists that Pilate set up over the cross a superscription stating that the man who hung on it was king of the Jews.¹ Is it likely that in the reign of Tiberius a Roman governor, with the fear of the jealous and suspicious old emperor before his eyes, would have ventured, even in mockery, to blazon forth a seditious claim of this sort unless it were the regular formula employed on such occasions, recognised by custom and therefore not liable to be misconstrued into treason by the malignity of informers and the fears of a tyrant?

But if the tragedy of the ill-fated aspirant after royal honours was annually enacted at Jerusalem by a prisoner who perished on the cross, it becomes probable that the part of his successful rival was also played by another actor who paraded in the same kingly trappings but did not share the same fate. If Jesus was the Haman of the year, where was the Mordecai? Perhaps we may find him in Barabbas.

We are told by the Evangelists that at the feast which witnessed the crucifixion of Christ it was the custom for the Roman governor to release one prisoner, whomsoever the people desired, and that Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jesus, attempted to persuade the multitude to choose him as the man who should go free. But, hounded on by the priests and elders who had marked out Jesus for destruction, the rabble would not hear of this, and clamoured for the blood of Jesus, while they demanded the release of a certain miscreant, by name Barabbas, who lay in gaol for murder and sedition. Accordingly Pilate had to give way: Christ

¹ Matthew xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 38; John xix. 19.

was crucified and Barabbas set at liberty.¹ Now what, we may ask, was the reason for setting free a prisoner at this festival? In the absence of positive information, we may conjecture that the gaol-bird whose cage was thrown open at this time had to purchase his freedom by performing some service from which decent people would shrink. Such a service may very well have been that of going about the streets, rigged out in tawdry splendour with a tinsel crown on his head and a sham sceptre in his hand, preceded and followed by all the tag-rag and bobtail of the town hooting, jeering, and breaking coarse jests at his expense, while some pretended to salaam his mock majesty, and others belaboured the donkey on which he rode. It was in this fashion, probably, that in Persia the beardless and one-eyed man made his undignified progress through the town, to the delight of ragamuffins and the terror of shopkeepers, whose goods he unceremoniously confiscated if they did not hasten to lay their peace-offerings at his feet. So, perhaps, the ruffian Barabbas, when his irons were knocked off and the prison door had grated on its hinges to let him forth, tasted the first sweets of liberty in this public manner, even if he was not suffered, like his one-eyed brother, to make raids with impunity on the stalls of the merchants and the tables of the money-changers. A curious confirmation of this conjecture is supplied by a passage in the writings of Philo the Jew, who lived at Alexandria in the time of Christ. He tells us that when Agrippa, the grandson of Herod, had received the crown of Judaea from Caligula at Rome, the new king passed through Alexandria on his way to his own country. The disorderly populace of that great city, animated by a hearty dislike of his nation, seized the opportunity of venting their spite by publicly defaming and ridiculing the Jewish monarch. Among other things they laid hold of a certain harmless lunatic named Carabas, who used to roam the streets stark naked, the butt and laughing-stock of urchins and idlers. This poor wretch they set up in a public place, clapped a paper crown on his head, thrust a broken reed into his hand by way of a sceptre, and having huddled

¹ Matthew xxvii. 15-26; Mark xv. 6-15; Luke xxiii. 16-25; John xviii. 38-40.

a mat instead of a royal robe about his naked body, and surrounded him with a guard of bludgeon-men, they did obeisance to him as to a king and made a show of taking his opinion on questions of law and policy. To point the jest unmistakably at the Syrian king Agrippa, the bystanders raised cries of "Marin! Marin!" which they understood to be the Syrian word for "lord."¹ This mockery of the Jewish king closely resembles the mockery of Christ; and the joke, such as it was, would receive a keener edge if we could suppose that the riff-raff of Alexandria were familiar with the Jewish practice of setting up a sham king on certain occasions, and that they meant by implication to ridicule the real King Agrippa by comparing him to his holiday counterfeit. May we go a step further and conjecture that one at least of the titles of the mock king of the Jews was regularly Barabbas? The poor imbecile who masqueraded in a paper crown at Alexandria was probably a Jew, otherwise the jest would have lost much of its point; and his name, according to the Greek manuscripts of Philo, was Carabas. But Carabas is meaningless in Hebrew, whereas Barabbas is a regularly formed Hebrew word meaning "Son of the Father." The palaeographic difference between the two forms is slight, and perhaps we shall hardly be deemed very rash if we conjecture that in the passage in question Philo himself wrote Barabbas, which a Greek copyist, ignorant of Hebrew, afterwards corrupted into Carabas. If this were granted, we should still have to assume that both Philo and the authors of the Gospels fell into the mistake of treating as the name of an individual what in fact was a title of office.

Thus the hypothesis which, with great diffidence, I would put forward for consideration is this. It was customary, we may suppose, with the Jews at Purim, or perhaps occasionally at Passover, to employ two prisoners to act the parts respectively of Haman and Mordecai in the passion-play which formed a central feature of the festival. Both men paraded for a short time in the insignia of royalty, but their fates were different; for while at the end of the performance

¹ Philo Judaeus, *Adversus Flaccum*, vol. ii. pp. 520-523 ed. Mangey. The first to call attention to this passage was Mr. P. Wendland ("Jesus als Saturnalien-König," *Hermes*, xxxiii. {1898}, p. 175 sq.).

the one who played Haman was hanged or crucified, the one who personated Mordecai and bore in popular parlance the title of Barabbas was allowed to go free. Pilate, perceiving the trumpety nature of the charges brought against Jesus, tried to persuade the Jews to let him play the part of Barabbas, which would have saved his life; but the merciful attempt failed and Jesus perished on the cross in the character of Haman. The description of his last triumphal ride into Jerusalem reads almost like an echo of that brilliant progress through the streets of Susa which Haman aspired to and Mordecai accomplished; and the account of the raid which he immediately afterwards made upon the stalls of the hucksters and money-changers in the temple, may raise a question whether we have not here a trace of those arbitrary rights over property which it has been customary on such occasions to accord to the temporary king.¹

If it be asked why one of these temporary kings should bear the remarkable title of Barabbas or "Son of the Father," I can only surmise that the title may perhaps be a relic of the time when the real king, the deified man, used to redeem his own life by deputing his son to reign for a short time and to die in his stead. We have seen that the custom of sacrificing the son for the father was common, if not universal, among Semitic peoples; and if we are right in our interpretation of the Passover, that festival—the traditional date of the crucifixion—was the very season when the dreadful sacrifice of the first-born was consummated.² Hence Barabbas or the "Son of the Father" would be a natural enough title for the man or child who reigned and died as a substitute for his royal sire. Even in later times, when the father provided a less precious substitute than his own offspring, it would be quite in accordance with the formal conservatism of religion that the old title should be retained after it had ceased to be appropriate; indeed the efficacy of the sacrifice might be thought to require and justify the pious fiction that the substitute was the very son of that divine father who should have died, but who preferred to live, for the good of his people. If in the time of Christ, as I have conjectured, the

¹ Matthew xxi. 1-13; Mark xi. 1-17; Luke xix. 28-46; John xii. 12-15.

² See above, vol. ii. pp. 38-50.

title of Barabbas or Son of the Father was bestowed on the Mordecai, the mock king who lived, rather than on the Haman, the mock king who died at the festival, this distinction can hardly have been original; for at first, we may suppose, the same man served in both capacities at different times, as the Mordecai of one year and the Haman of the next. The two characters, as I have attempted to show, are probably nothing but two different aspects of the same deity considered at one time as dead and at another as risen; hence the human being who personated the risen god would in due time, after he had enjoyed his divine honours for a season, act the dead god by dying in good earnest in his own person; for it would be unreasonable to expect of the ordinary man-god that he should play the two parts in the reverse order by dying first and coming to life afterwards. In both parts the substitute would still be, whether in sober fact or in pious fiction, the Barabbas or Son of that divine Father who generously gave his own son to die for the world.

To conclude this speculation, into which I have perhaps been led by the interest and importance of the subject somewhat deeper than the evidence warrants, I venture to urge in its favour that it seems to shed fresh light on some of the causes which contributed to the remarkably rapid diffusion of Christianity in Asia Minor. We know from a famous letter of the younger Pliny addressed to the Emperor Trajan in the year 112 A.D. that by the beginning of our era, less than a hundred years after the Founder's death, Christianity had made such strides in Bithynia and Pontus that not only cities but villages and rural districts were affected by it, and that multitudes of both sexes and of every age and every rank professed its tenets; indeed things had gone so far that the temples were almost deserted, the sacred rites of the public religion discontinued, and hardly a purchaser could be found for the sacrificial victims.¹ It is obvious therefore that

¹ Pliny, *Letters*, No. 98. The province which Pliny governed was known officially as Bithynia and Pontus, and extended from the river Rhyndacos on the west to beyond Amisus on the east. See Professor W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 224.

Professor Ramsay is of opinion "that the description of the great power acquired by the new religion in the province applies to Eastern Pontus at least." The chief religious centre of this district appears to have been the great sanctuary of Anaitis or Semiramis at

the new faith had elements in it which appealed powerfully to the Asiatic mind. What these elements were, the present investigation has perhaps to some extent disclosed. We have seen that the conception of the dying and risen god was no new one in these regions. All over Western Asia from time immemorial the mournful death and happy resurrection of a divine being appear to have been annually celebrated with alternate rites of bitter lamentation and exultant joy; and through the veil which mythic fancy has woven round this tragic figure we can still detect the features of those great yearly changes in earth and sky which, under all distinctions of race and religion, must always touch the natural human heart with alternate emotions of gladness and regret, because they exhibit on the vastest scale open to our observation the mysterious struggle between life and death. But man has not always been willing to watch passively this momentous conflict; he has felt that he has too great a stake in its issue to stand by with folded hands while it is being fought out; he has taken sides against the forces of death and decay—has flung into the trembling scale all the weight of his puny person and has exulted in his fancied strength when the great balance has slowly inclined towards the side of life, little knowing that for all his strenuous efforts he can as little stir that balance by a hair's-breadth as can the primrose on a mossy bank in spring or the dead leaf blown by the chilly breath of autumn. Nowhere do these efforts, vain and pitiful yet pathetic, appear to have been made more persistently and systematically than in Western Asia. In name they varied from place to place, but in substance they were all alike. A man, whom the fond imagination of his worshippers invested with the attributes of a god, gave

Zela, to which I have already had occasion to call the reader's attention. Strabo tells us (xii. 3. 37) that all the people of Pontus took their most solemn oaths at this shrine. In the same district there was another very popular sanctuary of a similar type at Comana, where the worship of a native goddess called Ma was carried on by a host of sacred harlots and by a high priest, who wore a diadem and was second only to the king in rank. At

the festivals of the goddess crowds of men and women flocked into Comana from all the region round about, from the country as well as from the cities. The luxury and debauchery of this holy town suggest to Strabo a comparison with the famous or rather infamous Corinth. See Strabo, xii. 3. 32 and 36, compared with xii. 2. 3. Such were some of the hot-beds in which the seeds of Christianity first struck root.

his life for the life of the world ; after infusing from his own body a fresh current of vital energy into the stagnant veins of nature, he was cut off from among the living before his failing strength should initiate a universal decay, and his place was taken by another who played, like all his predecessors, the ever-recurring drama of the divine resurrection and death. Such a drama, if our interpretation of it is right, was the original story of Esther and Mordecai or, to give them their older names, of Ishtar and Marduk. It was played in Babylonia, and from Babylonia the returning captives brought it to Judaea, where it was acted, rather as an historical than a mythical piece, by players who, having to die in grim earnest on a cross or gallows, were naturally drawn rather from the gaol than the green-room. A chain of causes which, because we cannot follow them, might in the loose language of daily life be called an accident, determined that the part of the dying god in this annual play should be thrust upon Jesus of Nazareth, whom the enemies he had made in high places by his outspoken strictures were resolved to put out of the way. They succeeded in ridding themselves of the popular and troublesome preacher ; but the very step by which they fancied they had simultaneously stamped out his revolutionary doctrines contributed more than anything else they could have done to scatter them broadcast not only over Judaea but over Asia ; for it impressed upon what had been hitherto mainly an ethical mission the character of a divine revelation culminating in the passion and death of the incarnate Son of a heavenly Father. In this form the story of the life and death of Jesus exerted an influence which it could never have had if the great teacher had died, as is commonly supposed, the death of a vulgar malefactor. It shed round the cross on Calvary a halo of divinity which multitudes saw and worshipped afar off ; the blow struck on Golgotha set a thousand expectant strings vibrating in unison wherever men had heard the old, old story of the dying and risen god. Every year, as another spring bloomed and another autumn faded across the earth, the field had been ploughed and sown and borne fruit of a kind till it received that seed which was destined to spring up and overshadow the world. In the

great army of martyrs who in many ages and in many lands, not in Asia only, have died a cruel death in the character of gods, the devout Christian will doubtless discern types and forerunners of the coming Saviour—stars that heralded in the morning sky the advent of the Sun of Righteousness—earthen vessels wherein it pleased the divine wisdom to set before hungering souls the bread of heaven. The sceptic, on the other hand, with equal confidence, will reduce Jesus of Nazareth to the level of a multitude of other victims of a barbarous superstition, and will see in him no more than a moral teacher, whom the fortunate accident of his execution invested with the crown, not merely of a martyr, but of a god. The divergence between these views is wide and deep. Which of them is the truer and will in the end prevail? Time will decide the question of prevalence, if not of truth. Yet we would fain believe that in this and in all things the old maxim will hold good—*Magna est veritas et praevalabit.*

We may now sum up the general results of the inquiry which we have pursued in the present section. We have found evidence that festivals of the type of the Saturnalia, characterised by an inversion of social ranks and the sacrifice of a man in the character of a god, were at one time held all over the ancient world from Italy to Babylon. Such festivals seem to date from an early age in the history of agriculture, when people lived in small communities, each presided over by a sacred or divine king, whose primary duty was to secure the orderly succession of the seasons and the fertility of the earth. Associated with him was his wife or other female consort, with whom he performed some of the necessary ceremonies, and who therefore shared his divine character. Originally his term of office appears to have been limited to a year, on the conclusion of which he was put to death; but in time he contrived by force or craft to extend his reign and sometimes to procure a substitute, who after a short and more or less nominal tenure of the crown was slain in his stead. At first the substitute for the divine father was probably the divine son, but afterwards this rule was no longer insisted on, and still later the growth of a humane feeling demanded that the victim should always be

a condemned criminal. In this advanced stage of degeneration it is no wonder if the light of divinity suffered eclipse, and many should fail to detect the god in the malefactor. Yet the downward career of fallen deity does not stop here ; even a criminal comes to be thought too good to personate a god on the gallows or in the fire ; and then there is nothing left but to make up a more or less grotesque effigy, and so to hang, burn, or otherwise destroy the god in the person of this sorry representative. By this time the original meaning of the ceremony may be so completely forgotten that the puppet is supposed to represent some historical personage, who earned the hatred and contempt of his fellows in his life, and whose memory has ever since been held up to eternal execration by the annual destruction of his effigy. The figures of Haman, of the Carnival, and of Winter or Death which are or used to be annually destroyed in spring by Jews, Catholics, and the peasants of Central Europe respectively, appear to be all lineal descendants of those human incarnations of the powers of nature whose life and death were deemed essential to the welfare of mankind. But of the three the only one which has preserved a clear trace of its original meaning is the effigy of Winter or Death. In the others the ancient significance of the custom as a magical ceremony designed to direct the course of nature has been almost wholly obscured by a thick aftergrowth of legend and myth. The cause of this distinction is that, whereas the practice of destroying an effigy of Winter or Death has been handed down from time immemorial through generations of simple peasants, the festivals of Purim and the Carnival, as well as their Babylonian and Italian prototypes, the *Sacaea* and the *Saturnalia*, were for centuries domesticated in cities, where they were necessarily exposed to those thousand transforming and disintegrating currents of speculation and inquiry, of priestcraft and policy, which roll their turbid waters through the busy haunts of men, but leave undefiled the limpid springs of mythic fancy in the country.

If there is any truth in the analysis of the *Saturnalia* and kindred festivals which I have now brought to a close, it seems to point to a remarkable homogeneity of civilisation throughout Southern Europe and Western Asia in pre-

historic times. How far such homogeneity of civilisation may be taken as evidence of homogeneity of race is a question for the ethnologist; it does not concern us here. But without discussing it, I may remind the reader that in the far east of Asia we have met with temporary kings whose magical functions and intimate relation to agriculture stand out in the clearest light;¹ while India furnishes examples of kings who have regularly been obliged to sacrifice themselves at the end of a term of years.² All these things appear to hang together; all of them may, perhaps, be regarded as the shattered remnants of a uniform zone of religion and society which at a remote era belted the Old World from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. Whether that was so or not, I may at least claim to have made it probable that if the King of the Wood at Aricia lived and died as an incarnation of a sylvan deity, the functions he thus discharged were by no means singular, and that for the nearest parallel to them we need not go beyond the bounds of Italy, where the divine king Saturn—the god of the sown and sprouting seed—was annually slain in the person of a human representative at his ancient festival of the Saturnalia.

¹ See above, vol. ii. p. 26 *sqq.*

² See above, vol. ii. p. 14 *sqq.*

CHAPTER IV

THE GOLDEN BOUGH

“Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.”—FAUST.

§ 1. *Between Heaven and Earth*

AT the outset of this book two questions were proposed for answer: Why had the priest of Aricia to slay his predecessor? And why, before doing so, had he to pluck the Golden Bough? Of these two questions the first has now been answered. The priest of Aricia, if I am right, embodied in himself the spirit, primarily, of the woods and, secondarily, of vegetable life in general. Hence, according as he was well or ill, the woods, the flowers, and the fields were believed to flourish or fade; and if he were to die of sickness or old age, the plant world, it was supposed, would simultaneously perish. Therefore it was necessary that this priest of the woodlands, this sylvan deity incarnate in a man, should be put to death while he was still in the full bloom of his divine manhood, in order that his sacred life, transmitted in unabated force to his successor, might renew its youth, and thus by successive transmissions through a perpetual line of vigorous incarnations might remain eternally fresh and young, a pledge and security that the buds and blossoms of spring, the verdure of summer woods, and the mellow glories of autumn would never fail.

But we have still to ask, What was the Golden Bough? and why had each candidate for the Arician priesthood to pluck it before he could slay the priest? These questions I will now try to answer.

It will be well to begin by noticing two of those rules or taboos by which, as we have seen, the life of divine kings or priests is regulated. The first of the rules to which I desire to call the reader's attention is that the divine personage may not touch the ground with his foot. This rule was observed by the Mikado of Japan and by the supreme pontiff of the Zapotecs in Mexico. The latter profaned his sanctity if he so much as touched the ground with his foot.¹ For the Mikado to touch the ground with his foot was a shameful degradation; indeed, in the sixteenth century, it was enough to deprive him of his office. Outside his palace he was carried on men's shoulders; within it he walked on exquisitely wrought mats.² The king and queen of Tahiti might not touch the ground anywhere but within their hereditary domains; for the ground on which they trod became sacred. In travelling from place to place they were carried on the shoulders of sacred men. They were always accompanied by several pairs of these sacred men; and when it became necessary to change their bearers, the king and queen vaulted on to the shoulders of their new bearers without letting their feet touch the ground.³ It was an evil omen if the king of Dosuma touched the ground, and he had to perform an expiatory ceremony.⁴ Within his palace the king of Persia walked on carpets on which no one else might tread; outside of it he was never seen on foot but only in a chariot or on horseback.⁵ In old days the king of Siam never set foot upon the earth, but was carried on a throne of gold from place to place.⁶ Formerly, neither the kings of Uganda nor their mothers might walk on foot outside the palace; they were always carried.⁷ The notion that contact

¹ Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 142.

² *Memorials of Japan* (Hakluyt Society, 1850), pp. 14, 141; Varenus, *Descriptio regni Japoniae*, p. 11; Caron, "Account of Japan," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vii. 613; Kaempfer, "History of Japan," in *id.* vii. 716.

³ W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, iii. 102 sq.; James Wilson, *Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean*, p. 329.

⁴ Bastian, *Der Mensch in der Geschichte*, iii. 81.

⁵ Athenaeus, xii. p. 514 C.

⁶ *The Voyages and Travels of John Struys* (London, 1684), p. 30.

⁷ This I have on the authority of my friend the Rev. J. Roscoe, missionary to Uganda. "Before horses had been introduced into Uganda, the king and his mother never walked, but always went about perched astride the shoulders of a slave—a most ludicrous sight. In this way they often travelled hundreds

with the ground carries with it pollution or danger may be applied to sacred animals. Thus some Victorian tribes regarded the fat of the emu as sacred, and in taking it from the bird or handing it about they treated it reverently. Any one who threw away the fat or flesh of the emu was held accursed. "The late Mr. Thomas observed on one occasion, at Nerre-nerre-Warreen, a remarkable exhibition of the effects of this superstition. An aboriginal child—one attending the school—having eaten some part of the flesh of an emu, threw away the skin. The skin fell to the ground, and this being observed by his parents, they showed by their gestures every token of horror. They looked upon their child as one utterly lost. His desecration of the bird was regarded as a sin for which there was no atonement."¹

The second rule to be here noted is that the sun may not shine upon the divine person. This rule was observed both by the Mikado and by the pontiff of the Zapotecs. The latter "was looked upon as a god whom the earth was not worthy to hold, nor the sun to shine upon."² The Japanese would not allow that the Mikado should expose his sacred person to the open air, and the sun was not thought worthy to shine on his head.³ The Indians of Granada, in South America, "kept those who were to be rulers or commanders, whether men or women, locked up for several years when they were children, some of them seven years, and this so close that they were not to see the sun, for if they should happen to see it they forfeited their lordship, eating certain sorts of food appointed; and those who were their keepers at certain times went into their retreat or prison and scourged them severely."⁴ Thus, for example, the heir to the throne of Bogota had to undergo a rigorous training from the age of sixteen; he lived in com-

of miles" (L. Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 445 note). The use both of horses and of chariots by royal personages may often have been intended to prevent their sacred feet from touching the ground.

¹ R. Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, i. 450.

² Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 142.

³ Kaempfer, "History of Japan," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vii. 717; Caron, "Account of Japan," *ibid.* vii. 613; Varenus, *Descriptio regni Japoniae*, p. 11: "Radiis solis caput nunquam illustrabatur: in apertum aërem non procedebat."

⁴ Herrera, *General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, trans. by Stevens, v. 88.

plete retirement in a temple, where he might not see the sun nor eat salt nor converse with a woman.¹ So, too, the heir to the kingdom of Sogamoso, before succeeding to the crown, had to fast for seven years in the temple, being shut up in the dark and not allowed to see the sun or light.² The prince who was to become Inca of Peru had to fast for a month without seeing light.³ Acarnanian peasants tell of a handsome prince called Sunless, who would die if he saw the sun. So he lived in an underground palace on the site of the ancient Oeniadae, but at night he came forth and crossed the river to visit a famous enchantress who dwelt in a castle on the further bank. She was loth to part with him every night long before the sun was up, and as he turned a deaf ear to all her entreaties to linger, she hit upon the device of cutting the throats of all the cocks in the neighbourhood. So the prince, whose ear had learned to expect the shrill clarion of the birds as the signal of the growing light, tarried too long, and hardly had he reached the ford when the sun rose over the Aetolian mountains, and its fatal beams fell on him before he could regain his dark abode.⁴

Now it is remarkable that these two rules—not to touch the ground and not to see the sun,—are observed either separately or conjointly by girls at puberty in many parts of the world. Thus amongst the negroes of Loango girls at puberty are confined in separate huts, and they may not touch the ground with any part of their bare body.⁵ Amongst the Zulus and kindred tribes of South Africa, when the first signs of puberty show themselves "while a girl is walking, gathering wood, or working in the field, she runs to the river and hides herself among the reeds for the day, so as not to be seen by men. She covers her head carefully with her blanket that the sun may not shine on it and shrivel her up

¹ Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, iv. 359.

² Alonzo de Zurita, "Rapport sur les différentes classes de chefs de la Nouvelle-Espagne," p. 30, in Ternaux-Compans's *Voyages, Relations et Mémoires originaux* (Paris, 1840); Waitz, *l.c.*; Bastian, *Die Culturländer des alten Amerika*, ii. 204.

³ Cieza de Leon, *Second Part of the Chronicle of Peru* (Hakluyt Soc. 1883), p. 18.

⁴ L. Heuzey, *Le Mont Olympe et l'Acarnanie* (Paris, 1860), p. 458 *sq.*

⁵ Pechuel-Loesche, "Indiscretus aus Loango," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, x. (1878), p. 23.

into a withered skeleton, as would result from exposure to the sun's beams. After dark she returns to her home and is secluded in a hut for some time.¹ With the Awa-nkonde, a tribe at the north end of Lake Nyasa, it is a rule that after her first menstruation a girl must be kept apart, with a few companions of her own sex, in a darkened house. The floor is covered with dry banana leaves, but no fire may be lit in the house, which is called "the house of the Awasungu," that is, "of maidens who have hearts."² When a girl reaches puberty, the Wafomi of Eastern Africa hold a festival at which they make a noise with a peculiar kind of rattle. After that the girl remains for a year in the large common hut, where she occupies a special compartment screened off from the men's quarters. She may not cut her hair or touch food, but is fed by other women. At night, however, she quits the hut and dances with young men.³

In New Ireland girls are confined for four or five years in small cages, being kept in the dark and not allowed to set foot on the ground. The custom has been thus described by an eye-witness. "I heard from a teacher about some strange custom connected with some of the young girls here, so I asked the chief to take me to the house where they were. The house was about twenty-five feet in length, and stood in a reed and bamboo enclosure, across the entrance to which a bundle of dried grass was suspended to show that it was strictly 'tabu.' Inside the house were three conical structures about seven or eight feet in height, and about ten or twelve feet in circumference at the bottom, and for about four feet from the ground, at which point they tapered off to a point at the top. These cages were made of the broad leaves of the pandanus-tree, sewn quite close together so that no light and little or no air could enter. On one side of each is an opening which is closed by a double door of plaited cocoa-nut tree and pandanus-tree leaves. About three feet from the ground there is a stage of bamboos which forms the floor. In each of these cages we were told there

¹ J. Macdonald, "Manners, customs, superstitions, and religions of South African tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xx. (1891), p. 118.

² Sir H. H. Johnston, *British Cen-*

tral Africa (London, 1897), p. 411.

³ O. Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle* (Berlin, 1894), p. 178. As to the rule not to touch food with the hands, see above, vol. i. pp. 323, 326 sq.

was a young woman confined, each of whom had to remain for at least four or five years, without ever being allowed to go outside the house. I could scarcely credit the story when I heard it; the whole thing seemed too horrible to be true. I spoke to the chief, and told him that I wished to see the inside of the cages, and also to see the girls that I might make them a present of a few beads. He told me that it was '*tabu*,' forbidden for any men but their own relations to look at them; but I suppose the promised beads acted as an inducement, and so he sent away for some old lady who had charge, and who alone is allowed to open the doors. While we were waiting we could hear the girls talking to the chief in a querulous way as if objecting to something or expressing their fears. The old woman came at length and certainly she did not seem a very pleasant jailor or guardian; nor did she seem to favour the request of the chief to allow us to see the girls, as she regarded us with anything but pleasant looks. However, she had to undo the door when the chief told her to do so, and then the girls peeped out at us, and when told to do so, they held out their hands for the beads. I, however, purposely sat at some distance away and merely held out the beads to them, as I wished to draw them quite outside, that I might inspect the inside of the cages. This desire of mine gave rise to another difficulty, as these girls were not allowed to put their feet to the ground all the time they were confined in these places. However, they wished to get the beads, and so the old lady had to go outside and collect a lot of pieces of wood and bamboo, which she placed on the ground, and then going to one of the girls, she helped her down and held her hand as she stepped from one piece of wood to another until she came near enough to get the beads I held out to her. I then went to inspect the inside of the cage out of which she had come, but could scarcely put my head inside of it, the atmosphere was so hot and stifling. It was clean and contained nothing but a few short lengths of bamboo for holding water. There was only room for the girl to sit or lie down in a crouched position on the bamboo platform, and when the doors are shut it must be nearly or quite dark inside. The girls are never allowed to come out except once a day to bathe in a dish or wooden

bowl placed close to each cage. They say that they perspire profusely. They are placed in these stifling cages when quite young, and must remain there until they are young women, when they are taken out and have each a great marriage feast provided for them."¹

In the island of Mabuiag, Torres Straits, when the signs of puberty appear on a girl, a circle of bushes is made in a dark corner of the house. Here, decked with shoulder-belts, armlets, leglets just below the knees, and anklets, wearing a chaplet on her head, and shell ornaments in her ears, on her chest, and on her back, she squats in the midst of the bushes, which are piled so high round about her that only her head is visible. In this state of seclusion she must remain for three months. All this time the sun may not shine upon her, but at night she is allowed to slip out of the hut, and the bushes that hedge her in are then changed. She may not feed herself or handle food, but is fed by one or two old women, her maternal aunts, who are especially appointed to look after her. One of these women cooks food for her at a special fire in the forest. The girl is forbidden to eat turtle or turtle eggs during the season when the turtles are breeding; but no vegetable food is refused her. No man, not even her own father, may come into the house while her seclusion lasts; for if her father saw her at this time he would certainly have bad luck in his fishing, and would probably smash his

¹ The Rev. G. Brown, quoted by the Rev. B. Hanks, "Marriage Customs of the New Britain Group," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xviii. (1889), p. 284 sq.; cp. Rev. G. Brown, "Notes on the Duke of York Group, New Britain, and New Ireland," *Journ. Royal Geogr. Soc.* xlvii. (1877), p. 142 sq. Powell's description of the New Ireland custom is similar (*Wanderings in a Wild Country*, p. 249). According to him, the girls wear wreaths of scented herbs round the waist and neck; an old woman or a little child occupies the lower floor of the cage; and the confinement lasts only a month. Probably the long period mentioned by Mr. Brown is that prescribed for chief's daughters. Poor people could not afford to keep their children so long idle. This distinction

is sometimes expressly stated; for example, among the Goajiras of Colombia rich people keep their daughters shut up in separate huts at puberty for periods varying from one to four years, but poor people cannot afford to do so for more than a fortnight or a month. See F. A. Simons, "An exploration of the Goajira Peninsula," *Proceed. Royal Geogr. Soc. N.S.*, vii. (1885), p. 791. In Fiji, brides who were being tattooed were kept from the sun (Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, i. 170). This was perhaps a modification of the Melanesian custom of secluding girls at puberty. The reason mentioned by Mr. Williams, "to improve her complexion," can hardly have been the original one.

canoe the very next time he went out in it. At the end of the three months she is carried down to a fresh-water creek by her attendants, hanging on to their shoulders in such a way that her feet do not touch the ground, while the women of the tribe form a ring round her, and thus escort her to the beach. Arrived at the shore, she is stripped of her ornaments, and the bearers stagger with her into the creek, where they immerse her, and all the other women join in splashing water over both the girl and her bearers. When they come out of the water one of the two attendants makes a heap of grass for her charge to squat upon. The other runs to the reef, catches a small crab, tears off its claws, and hastens back with them to the creek. Here in the meantime a fire has been kindled, and the claws are roasted at it. The girl is then fed by her attendants with the roasted claws. After that she is freshly decorated, and the whole party marches back to the village in a single rank, the girl walking in the centre between her two old aunts, who hold her by the wrists. The husbands of her aunts now receive her and lead her into the house of one of them, where all partake of food, and the girl is allowed once more to feed herself in the usual manner. A dance follows, in which the girl takes a prominent part, dancing between the husbands of the two aunts who had charge of her in her retirement.¹

Among the Yaraibanna tribe of Cape York Peninsula, in Northern Queensland, a girl at puberty is said to live by herself for a month or six weeks; no man may see her, though any woman may. She stays in a hut or shelter specially made for her, on the floor of which she lies supine. She may not see the sun, and towards sunset she must keep her eyes shut until the sun has gone down, otherwise it is thought that her nose will be diseased. During her seclusion she may eat nothing that lives in salt water, or a snake would kill her. An old woman waits upon her and supplies her with roots, yams, and water.² Some tribes are wont to bury their girls at such seasons more or less deeply in the

¹ From notes furnished me by Dr. C. G. Seligmann, member of the recent Cambridge Expedition to Torres Straits and Borneo. These notes have been printed in the *Report of the*

British Association for 1899, and in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxix. (1899), p. 212 sq.

² From the notes of Dr. C. G. Seligmann.

ground, perhaps in order to hide them from the light of the sun. Thus the Larrakeeyah tribe in the northern territory of South Australia used to cover a girl up with dirt for three days at her first monthly period.¹ In similar circumstances the Otati tribe, on the east coast of the Cape York Peninsula, make an excavation in the ground, where the girl squats. A bower is then built over the hole, and sand is thrown on the young woman till she is covered up to the hips. In this condition she remains for the first day, but comes out at night. So long as the period lasts, she stays in the bower during the daytime, but is not again covered with sand. Afterwards her body is painted red and white from the head to the hips, and she returns to the camp.² Among the Uijumhwi tribe in Red Island the girl lies at full length in a shallow trench dug in the foreshore, and sand is thrown over her legs and body up to the breasts, which appear not to be covered. A rough shelter of boughs is then built over her, and thus she remains lying for a few hours.³ In Prince of Wales Island, Torres Strait, the treatment of the patient is similar, but lasts for about two months. During the day she lies covered up with sand in a shallow hole on the beach, over which a hut is built. At night she may get out of the hole, but she may not leave the hut. Her paternal aunt looks after her, and both of them must abstain from eating turtle, dugong, and the heads of fish. Were they to eat the heads of fish no more fish would be caught. During the time of the girl's seclusion, the aunt who waits upon her has the right to enter any house and take from it anything she likes without payment, provided she does so before the sun rises. When the time of her retirement has come to an end the girl bathes in the sea while the morning star is rising, and after performing various other ceremonies is readmitted to society.⁴

¹ L. Crawford, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895), p. 181.

² From the notes of Dr. C. G. Seligmann.

³ From the notes of Dr. C. G. Seligmann.

⁴ From the notes of Dr. C. G. Seligmann. The practice of burying a girl at puberty was observed also by some

Indian tribes of California, but apparently rather for the purpose of producing a sweat than for the sake of concealment. The treatment lasted only twenty-four hours, during which the patient was removed from the ground and washed three or four times, to be afterwards rebedded. Dancing was kept up the whole time by the women. See Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, v. 215.

In some parts of New Guinea "daughters of chiefs, when they are about twelve or thirteen years of age, are kept indoors for two or three years, never being allowed, under any pretence, to descend from the house, and the house is so shaded that the sun cannot shine on them."¹ Among the Ot Danoms of Borneo girls at the age of eight or ten years are shut up in a little room or cell of the house, and cut off from all intercourse with the world for a long time. The cell, like the rest of the house, is raised on piles above the ground, and is lit by a single small window opening on a lonely place, so that the girl is in almost total darkness. She may not leave the room on any pretext whatever, not even for the most necessary purposes. None of her family may see her all the time she is shut up, but a single slave woman is appointed to wait on her. During her lonely confinement, which often lasts seven years, the girl occupies herself in weaving mats or with other handiwork. Her bodily growth is stunted by the long want of exercise, and when, on attaining womanhood, she is brought out, her complexion is pale and wax-like. She is now shown the sun, the earth, the water, the trees, and the flowers, as if she were newly born. Then a great feast is made, a slave is killed, and the girl is smeared with his blood.² In Ceram girls at puberty were formerly shut up by themselves in a hut which was kept dark.³

Amongst the Aht or Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island, when girls reach puberty they are placed in a sort of gallery in the house "and are there surrounded completely with mats, so that neither the sun nor any fire can be seen. In this cage they remain for several days. Water is given them, but no food. The longer a girl remains in this retirement the greater honour is it to the parents; but she is disgraced for life if it is known that she has seen fire or the sun during this initiatory ordeal."⁴ Pictures of the

¹ Chalmers and Gill, *Work and Adventure in New Guinea*, p. 159.

632 sq.; Otto Finsch, *Neu Guinea und seine Bewohner*, p. 116 sq.

² Schwaner, *Borneo, Beschrijving van het strooingebied van den Barito*, etc. ii. 77 sq.; Zimmerman, *Die Inseln d. Indischen und Stillen Meeres*, ii.

³ Riedel, *De sluit. en kroesharij rassen tusschen Sebeles en Papua*, p. 138.

⁴ Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, p. 93 sq.

mythical thunder-bird are painted on the screens behind which she hides. During her seclusion she may neither move nor lie down, but must always sit in a squatting posture. She may not touch her hair with her hands, but is allowed to scratch her head with a comb or a piece of bone provided for the purpose. To scratch her body is also forbidden, as it is believed that every scratch would leave a scar. For eight months after reaching maturity she may not eat any fresh food, particularly salmon; moreover, she must eat by herself, and use a cup and dish of her own.¹ Amongst the Thlinket or Kolosh Indians of Alaska, when a girl shows signs of womanhood she is confined to a little hut or cage, which is completely blocked up with the exception of a small air-hole. In this dark and filthy abode she had formerly to remain a year, without fire, exercise, or associates. Her food was put in at the small window; she had to drink out of the wing-bone of a white-headed eagle. The time has now been reduced, at least in some places, to six months. The girl has to wear a sort of hat with long flaps, that her gaze may not pollute the sky; for she is thought unfit for the sun to shine upon.² In the Bilqula or Bella Coola tribe of British Columbia, when a girl attains puberty she must stay in the shed which serves as her bedroom, where she has a separate fireplace. She is

¹ Fr. Boas in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 40-42 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1890*). The rule not to lie down is observed also during their seclusion at puberty by Tsimshian girls, who always sit propped up between boxes and mats: their heads are covered with small mats, and they may not look at men nor at fresh salmon and olachen. See Boas in *Fifth Report*, etc., p. 41 (reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1889*). We have seen (vol. i. p. 236) that some divine kings are not allowed to lie down.

² Erman, "Ethnographische Wahrnehmungen und Erfahrungen an den Küsten des Berings Meeres," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, ii. 318 sq.; Langsdorff, *Reise um die Welt*, ii. 114 sq.; Holm-

berg, "Ethnogr. Skizzen über die Völker d. russischen Amerika," *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae*, iv. (1856), p. 329 sq.; Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, i. 110 sq.; Krause, *Die Thlinket-Indianer*, p. 217 sq.; Rev. Sheldon Jackson, "Alaska and its Inhabitants," *American Anti-quarian*, ii. 111 sq.; W. M. Grant, in *Journal of American Folk-lore*, i. (1888), p. 169. For caps, hoods, and veils worn by girls at such seasons, compare G. H. Loskiel, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Indians*, i. 56; *Journal Anthropol. Institute*, vii. (1878), p. 206; G. M. Dawson, *Report of the Queen Charlotte Islands*, 1878 (*Geological Survey of Canada*), p. 130 B; Petitot, *Mono-graphie des Déné-Dindjé*, pp. 72, 75; *id.*, *Traditions indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest*, p. 258.

not allowed to descend to the main part of the house, and may not sit by the fire of the family. For four days she is bound to remain motionless in a sitting posture. She fasts during the day, but is allowed a little food and drink very early in the morning. After the four days' seclusion she may leave her room, but only through a separate opening cut in the floor, for the houses are raised on piles. She may not yet come into the chief room. In leaving the house she wears a large hat which protects her face against the rays of the sun. It is believed that if the sun were to shine on her face her eyes would suffer. She may pick berries on the hills, but may not come near the river or sea for a whole year. Were she to eat fresh salmon she would lose her senses, or her mouth would be changed into a long beak.¹ In the Tsetsaut tribe of British Columbia, a girl at puberty wears a large hat of skin which comes down over her face and screens it from the sun. It is believed that if she were to expose her face to the sun or to the sky, rain would fall. The hat protects her face also against the fire, which ought not to strike her skin; to shield her hands she wears mittens. In her mouth she carries the tooth of an animal to prevent her own teeth from becoming hollow. For a whole year she may not see blood unless her face is blackened; otherwise she would grow blind. For two years she wears the hat and lives in a hut by herself, although she is allowed to see other people. At the end of the two years a man takes the hat from her head and throws it away.² Among the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia, when a girl attained puberty, she was at once separated from all the people. A conical hut of fir branches and bark was erected at some little distance from the other houses, and in it the girl had to squat on her heels during the day. Often a circular hole was dug in the hut and the girl squatted in the hole. She might quit the hut for various purposes in the early morning, but had always to be back

¹ Fr. Boas, in *Fifth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 42 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1889*); *id.*, in *Seventh Report*, etc., p. 12 (reprint from the *Report of the British Associa-*

tion for 1891).

² Fr. Boas, in *Tenth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 45 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1895*).

at sunrise. A heavy blanket swathed her body from top to toe, and during the first four days she wore a conical cap made of small fir branches, which reached below the breast but left an opening for the face. In her hair was fastened an implement made of deer-bone with which she scratched herself. For the first four days she might neither wash nor eat, but a little water was given her in a birch-bark cup painted red, and she sucked up the liquid through a tube made out of the leg of a crane, a swan, or a goose, for her lips might not touch the surface of the water. After the four days she was allowed, during the rest of the period of isolation, to eat, to wash, to lie down, to comb her hair, and to drink of streams and springs. But in drinking at these sources she had still to use her tube, otherwise the spring would dry up. While her seclusion lasted she performed various ceremonies, which were supposed to exert a beneficial influence on her future life. For example, she carried four stones in her bosom to a spring, where she spat upon the stones and threw them one after the other into the water, praying that all disease might leave her as these stones did. Also she ran four times in the early morning with two small stones in her bosom; and as she ran the stones slipped down between her bare body and her clothes and fell to the ground. At the same time she prayed to the Dawn that when she should be with child, she might be delivered as easily as she was delivered of these stones. Her seclusion lasted four months. The Indians say that long ago it extended over a year, and that fourteen days elapsed before the girl was permitted to wash for the first time. The dress which she wore during her time of separation was afterwards taken to the top of a hill and burned, and the rest of her clothes were hung up on trees.¹ Amongst the Koniags, an Esquimaux people of Alaska, girls at puberty were placed in small huts in which they had to remain on their hands and knees for six months; then the hut was enlarged enough to let them kneel up-

¹ James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. ii. part iv. (April 1900),

pp. 311-317. The ceremony intended to procure an easy delivery is clearly an imitation of childbirth. See above, vol. i. p. 19 sqq.

right, and they had to remain in this posture for six months more.¹

When symptoms of puberty appeared on a girl for the first time, the Indians of the Rio de la Plata used to sew her up in her hammock as if she were dead, leaving only a small hole for her mouth to allow her to breathe. In this state she continued so long as the symptoms lasted.² In similar circumstances the Chiriguanos of Bolivia hoisted the girl in her hammock to the roof, where she stayed for a month; the second month the hammock was let half-way down from the roof; and in the third month old women, armed with sticks, entered the hut and ran about striking everything they met, saying they were hunting the snake that had wounded the girl. This they did till one of the women gave out that she had killed the snake.³ Among the Matacos Indians of the Grand Chaco a girl at puberty has to remain in seclusion for some time. She lies covered up with branches or other things in a corner of the hut, seeing no one and speaking to no one, and during this time she may eat neither flesh nor fish. Meanwhile a drum is beaten in front of the hut.⁴ Amongst some of the Brazilian Indians, when a girl attained to puberty, her hair was burned or shaved off close to the head. Then she was placed on a flat stone and cut with the tooth of an animal from the shoulders all down the back, till she ran with blood. Next the ashes of a wild gourd were rubbed into the wounds; the girl was bound band and foot, and hung in a hammock, being enveloped in it so closely that no one could see her. Here she had to stay for three days without eating or drinking. When the three days were over, she stepped out of the hammock upon the flat stone, for her feet might not touch the ground. If she had a call of nature, a female relation took the girl on her back and carried her out, taking with her a live coal to prevent evil influences from entering the girl's body. Being

¹ Holmberg, in *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicæ*, iv. (1856), p. 401; Petroff, *Report on the Population, etc., of Alaska*, p. 143.

² *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, viii. 333. On the Chiriguanos see Vca Marius, *Zur Ethnographie Amerikas zumal Brasiliens*, p. 212 sqq.

³ Lafitau, *Mœurs des Sauvages américains*, i. 262 sq.

⁴ Father Cardus, quoted in J. Pelleschi's *Los Indios Matacos* (Buenos Ayres, 1897), p. 47 sq.

replaced in her hammock, she was now allowed to get some flour, boiled roots, and water, but might not taste salt or flesh. Thus she continued to the end of the first monthly period, at the expiry of which she was gashed on the breast and belly as well as all down the back. During the second month she still stayed in her hammock, but her rule of abstinence was less rigid, and she was allowed to spin. The third month she was blackened with a certain pigment and began to go about as usual.¹

Amongst the Macusis of British Guiana, when a girl shows the first signs of puberty, she is hung in a hammock at the highest point of the hut. For the first few days she may not leave the hammock by day, but at night she must come down, light a fire, and spend the night beside it, else she would break out in sores on her neck, throat, and other parts of her body. So long as the symptoms are at their height, she must fast rigorously. When they have abated, she may come down and take up her abode in a little compartment that is made for her in the darkest corner of the hut. In the morning she may cook her food, but it must be at a separate fire and in a vessel of her own. In about ten days the magician comes and undoes the spell by muttering charms and breathing on her and on the more valuable of the things with which she has come in contact. The pots and drinking-vessels which she used are broken and the fragments buried. After her first bath, the girl must submit to be beaten by her mother with thin rods without uttering a cry. At the end of the second period she is again beaten, but not afterwards. She is now "clean," and can mix again with people.² Other Indians of Guiana, after keeping the girl in her hammock at the top of the hut for a month, expose her to certain large ants, whose bite is very painful.³ Sometimes, in addition to being stung with ants, the sufferer has to fast day and night so long as she remains slung up on high in her hammock, so that when she comes down she is reduced to a skeleton. The

¹ Thevet, *Cosmographie Universelle* (Paris, 1575), ii. 946 B sq. : Laitau, *op. cit.* i. 290 sqq.

² Schomburgk, *Reisen in Britisch Guiana*, ii. 315 sq. : Martius, *Zur*

Ethnographie Amerika's, p. 644.

³ Labat, *Voyage du Chevalier des Marchais en Guinée, Isles voisines, et à Cayenne*, iv. 365 sq. (Paris ed.), p. 17 sq. (Amsterdam ed.).

intention of stinging her with ants is said to be to make her strong to bear the burden of maternity.¹ Amongst the Uaupes of Brazil a girl at puberty is secluded in the house for a month, and allowed only a small quantity of bread and water. Then she is taken out into the midst of her relations and friends, each of whom gives her four or five blows with picces of *sipo* (an elastic climber), till she falls senseless or dead. If she recovers, the operation is repeated four times at intervals of six hours, and it is considered an offence to the parents not to strike hard. Meantime, pots of meats and fish have been made ready; the *sipos* are dipped into them and then given to the girl to lick, who is now considered a marriageable woman.²

The custom of stinging the girl at such times with ants or beating her with rods is intended, we may be sure, not as a punishment or a test of endurance, but as a purification, the object being to drive away the malignant influences with which a girl in this condition is believed to be beset and enveloped. Examples of purification, both by beating and by stinging with ants, have already come before us.³ No people, probably, submit voluntarily to more excruciating tortures from the stings not merely of ants but of the most ferocious wasps than the Indians of Cayenne; yet amongst them, we are told, "the custom is by no means an ordeal preparatory to marriage; it is rather a sort of national medicine administered chiefly to the youth of both sexes." Applied to men, the *maraké*, as it is called, "sharpens them, prevents them from being heavy and lazy, makes them active, brisk, industrious, imparts strength, and helps them to shoot well with the bow, without it the Indians would always be slack and rather sickly, would always have a little fever, and would lie perpetually in their hammocks. As for the women, the *maraké* keeps them from going to sleep, renders them active, alert, brisk, gives them strength and a liking for

¹ A. Caulin, *Historia Corographica natural y evangelica dela Nueva Andalucia* (1779), p. 93. A similar custom, with the omission of the stinging, is reported of the Tamanaks in the region of the Orinoco. See F. S.

Gillj, *Saggio di Storia Americana*, ii. (Rome, 1781), p. 133.

² A. R. Wallace, *Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, p. 496.

³ Above, p. 127 *sqq.*; vol. i. p. 301.

work, makes them good housekeepers, good workers at the stockade, good makers of *cachiri*. Every one undergoes the *maraké* at least twice in his life, sometimes thrice, and oftener if he likes. It may be had from the age of about eight years and upward, and no one thinks it odd that a man of forty should voluntarily submit to it."¹ Similarly the Indians of St. Juan Capistrano in California used to be branded on some part of their bodies, generally on the right arm, but sometimes on the leg also, not as a proof of manly fortitude, but because they believed that the custom "added greater strength to the nerves, and gave a better pulse for the management of the bow." Afterwards "they were whipped with nettles, and covered with ants, that they might become robust, and the infliction was always performed in summer, during the months of July and August, when the nettle was in its most fiery state. They gathered small bunches, which they fastened together, and the poor deluded Indian was chastised, by inflicting blows with them upon his naked limbs, till unable to walk; and then he was carried to the nearest and most furious species of ants, and laid down among them, while some of his friends, with sticks, kept annoying the insects to make them still more violent. What torments did they not undergo! What pain! What hellish inflictions! Yet their faith gave them power to endure all without a murmur, and they remained as if dead. Having undergone these dreadful ordeals, they were considered as invulnerable, and believed that the arrows of their enemies could no longer harm them."² Among the Alur, a tribe inhabiting the south-western region of the upper Nile, to bury a man in an ant-hill and leave him there for a while is the regular treatment for insanity.³ In like manner it is probable that beating or scourging as a religious or ceremonial rite was originally a mode of purification. It was meant to wipe off and drive away a dangerous contagion, whether personified as demoniacal or not, which was supposed

¹ H. Coudreau, *Cher nos Indiens: quatre années dans la Guyane Française* (Paris, 1895), p. 228. For details as to the different modes of administering the *maraké*, see *ibid.* pp. 228-235.

² Boscana, "Chinigichinich," in A.

Robinson's *Life in California* (New York, 1846), p. 273 sq.

³ F. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 506.

to be adhering physically, though invisibly, to the body of the sufferer.¹ The pain inflicted on the person beaten was no more the object of the beating than it is of a surgical operation with us; it was a necessary accident, that was all. In later times such customs were interpreted otherwise, and the pain, from being an accident, became the prime object of the ceremony, which was now regarded either as a test of endurance imposed upon persons at critical epochs of life, or as a mortification of the flesh well pleasing to the god. But asceticism, under any shape or form, is never primitive. The savage, it is true, in certain circumstances will voluntarily subject himself to pains and privations which appear to us wholly needless; but he never acts thus unless

¹ As a confirmation of this view it may be pointed out that beating or scourging is inflicted on inanimate objects expressly for the purpose indicated in the text. Thus the Indians of Costa Rica hold that there are two kinds of ceremonial uncleanness, *nya* and *bu-ku-rú*. Anything that has been connected with a death is *nya*. But *bu-ku-rú* is much more virulent. It can not only make one sick but kill. "The worst *bu-ku-rú* of all is that of a young woman in her first pregnancy. She infects the whole neighbourhood. Persons going from the house where she lives carry the infection with them to a distance, and all the deaths or other serious misfortunes in the vicinity are laid to her charge. In the old times, when the savage laws and customs were in full force, it was not an uncommon thing for the husband of such a woman to pay damages for casualties thus caused by his unfortunate wife. . . . *Bu-ku-rú* emanates in a variety of ways; arms, utensils, even houses become affected by it after long disuse, and before they can be used again must be purified. In the case of portable objects left undisturbed for a long time, the custom is to beat them with a stick before touching them. I have seen a woman take a long walking-stick and beat a basket hanging from the roof of a house by a cord. On asking what that was for, I was told that the basket contained her treasures,

that she would probably want to take something out the next day, and that she was driving off the *bu-ku-rú*. A house long unused must be swept, and then the persoo who is purifying it must take a stick and beat not only the movable objects, but the beds, posts, and in short every accessible part of the interior. The next day it is fit for occupation. A place not visited for a long time or reached for the first time is *bu-ku-rú*. On our return from the ascent of Pico Blanco, nearly all the party suffered from little calenturas, the result of extraordinary exposure to wet and cold and want of food. The Indians said that the peak was especially *bu-ku-rú*, since nobody had ever been on it before." One day Mr. Gabb took down some dusty blow-guns amid cries of *bu-ku-rú* from the Indians. Some weeks afterwards a boy died, and the Indians firmly believed that the *bu-ku-rú* of the blow-guns had killed him. "From all the foregoing, it would seem that *bu-ku-rú* is a sort of evil spirit that takes possession of the object, and resents being disturbed; but I have never been able to learn from the Indians that they consider it so. They seem to think of it as a property the object acquires." W. M. Gabb, *Indian Tribes and Languages of Costa Rica* (read before the American Philosophical Society, 20th August 1875), p. 504 sq.

he believes that some solid temporal advantage is to be gained by so doing. Pain for the sake of pain, whether as a moral discipline in this life or as a means of winning a glorious immortality hereafter, is not an object which he sets himself deliberately to pursue.

When a Hindoo maiden reaches maturity she is kept in a dark room for four days, and is forbidden to see the sun. She is regarded as unclean; no one is allowed to touch her. Her diet is restricted to boiled rice, milk, sugar, curd, and tamarind without salt.¹ The Rarhi Brahmans of Bengal compel a girl at puberty to live alone, and do not allow her to see the face of any male. For three days she remains shut up in a dark room, and has to undergo certain penances. Fish, flesh, and sweetmeats are forbidden her; she must live upon rice and ghee.² In Cambodia a girl at puberty is put to bed under a mosquito curtain, where she should stay a hundred days. Usually, however, four, five, ten, or twenty days are thought enough; and even this, in a hot climate and under the close meshes of the curtain, is sufficiently trying.³ According to another account, a Cambodian maiden at puberty is said to "enter into the shade." During her retirement, which, according to the rank and position of her family, may last any time from a few days to several years, she has to observe a number of rules, such as not to be seen by a strange man, not to eat flesh or fish, and so on. She goes nowhere, not even to the pagoda. But this state of seclusion is discontinued during eclipses; at such times she goes forth and pays her devotions to the monster who is supposed to cause eclipses by catching the heavenly bodies between his teeth.⁴ This permission to break her rule of

¹ S. C. Bose, *The Hindoos as they are*, p. 86. Similarly, after a Brahman boy has been invested with the sacred thread, he is for three days strictly forbidden to see the sun. He may not eat salt, and he is enjoined to sleep either on a carpet or a deer's skin, without a mattress or mosquito curtain (*ibid.* p. 186). In Bali, boys who have had their teeth filed, as a preliminary to marriage, are kept shut up in a dark room for three days (Van Eck, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali,"

Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië, N.S., ix. (1880), p. 428 sq.).

² H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, *Ethnographic Glossary*, i. 152.

³ Moura, *Royaume du Cambodge*, i. 377.

⁴ Aymonier, "Notes sur les coutumes et croyances superstitieuses des Cambodgiens," *Cochinchine Française: Excursions et Reconnaissances*, No. 16 (Saigon, 1883), p. 193 sq. Cp. *id.*, *Notice sur le Cambodge*, p. 50.

retirement and show herself abroad during an eclipse seems to show how literally the injunction is interpreted which forbids maidens entering on womanhood to look upon the sun.

A superstition so widely diffused as this might be expected to leave traces in legends and folk-tales. And it has done so. In a Danish story we read of a princess who was fated to be carried off by a warlock if ever the sun shone on her before she had passed her thirtieth year; so the king her father kept her shut up in the palace, and had all the windows on the east, south, and west sides blocked up, lest a sunbeam should fall on his darling child, and he should thus lose her for ever.¹ A Tyrolese story tells how it was the doom of a lovely maiden to be transported into the belly of a whale if ever a sunbeam fell on her.² In a modern Greek folk-tale the Fates predict that in her fifteenth year a princess must be careful not to let the sun shine on her, for if this were to happen she would be turned into a lizard.³ In another modern Greek tale the Sun bestows a daughter upon a childless woman on condition of taking the child back to himself when she is twelve years old. So, when the child was twelve, the mother closed the doors and windows, and stopped up all the chinks and crannies, to prevent the Sun from coming to fetch away her daughter. But she forgot to stop up the key-hole, and a sunbeam streamed through it and carried off the girl.⁴ In a Sicilian story a seer foretells that a king will have a daughter who, in her fourteenth year, will conceive a child by the Sun. So, when the child was born, the king shut her up in a lonely tower which had no window, lest a sunbeam should fall on her. When she was nearly fourteen years old, it happened that her parents sent her a piece of roasted kid, in which she found a sharp bone. With this bone she scraped a hole in the wall, and a sunbeam shot through the hole and impregnated her.⁵ The old Greek story of Danae,

¹ Grundtvig, *Dänische Volksmärchen*, übersetzt von A. Strodlmann, Zweite Sammlung (Leipsic, 1879), p. 199 sqq.

² Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, No. 22.

³ B. Schmidt, *Griechische Märchen, Sagen und Volkslieder*, p. 98.

⁴ J. G. von Hahn, *Griechische und albanesische Märchen*, No. 41.

⁵ Gonzenbach, *Sicilianische Märchen*, No. 28. The incident of the bone

who was confined by her father in a subterranean chamber or a brazen tower, but impregnated by Zeus, who reached her in the shape of a shower of gold,¹ perhaps belongs to the same class of tales. It has its counterpart in the legend which the Kirghiz of Siberia tell of their ancestry. A certain Khan had a fair daughter, whom he kept in a dark iron house, that no man might see her. An old woman tended her; and when the girl was grown to maidenhood she asked the old woman, "Where do you go so often?"—"My child," said the old dame, "there is a bright world. In that bright world your father and mother live, and all sorts of people live there. That is where I go." The maiden said, "Good mother, I will tell nobody, but show me that bright world." So the old woman took the girl out of the iron house. But when she saw the bright world, the girl tottered and fainted; and the eye of God fell upon her, and she conceived. Her angry father put her in a golden chest and sent her floating away (fairy gold can float in fairyland) over the wide sea.² The shower of gold in the Greek story, and the eye of God in the Kirghiz legend, probably stand for sunlight and the

occurs in other folk-tales. A prince or princess is shut up for safety in a tower and makes his or her escape by scraping a hole in the wall with a bone which has been accidentally conveyed into the tower; sometimes it is expressly said that care was taken to let the princess have no bones with her meat (Hahn, *op. cit.* No. 15; Gonzenbach, Nos. 26, 27; *Pentameron*, No. 23). From this we should infer that it is a rule with savages not to let women handle the bones of animals during their monthly seclusions. We have already seen the great respect with which the savage treats the bones of game (see above, vol. ii. p. 404 *sqq.*); and women in their courses are specially forbidden to meddle with the hunter or fisher, as their contact or neighbourhood would spoil his sport (see below, pp. 222 *sq.*, 226 *sq.*, 229 *sq.*). In folk-tales the hero who uses the bone is sometimes a boy; but the incident might easily be transferred from a girl to a boy after its real meaning had been forgotten. Amongst the Hare-skin

Indians a girl at puberty is forbidden to break the bones of hares (Petitot, *Traditions indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest*, p. 258). On the other hand, she drinks out of a tube made of a swan's bone (Petitot, *l.c.*; *id.*, *Monographie des Déné-Dindjé*, p. 76), and the same instrument is used for the same purpose by girls of the Carrier tribe of Indians (see below, p. 228). We have seen that a Thlinkeet girl in the same circumstances used to drink out of the wing-bone of a white-headed eagle (Langsdorff, *Reise um die Welt*, ii. 114), and that among the Nootka and Shushwap tribes girls at puberty are provided with bones or combs with which to scratch themselves, because they may not use their fingers for this purpose (above, p. 211; and vol. i. p. 326, note 2).

¹ Sophocles, *Antigone*, 944 *sqq.*; Apollodorus, ii. 4. 14; Horace, *Odes*, iii. 16. 1 *sqq.*; Pausanias, ii. 23. 7.

² W. Radloff, *Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens*, iii. 82 *sq.*

sun. The idea that women may be impregnated by the sun is not uncommon in legends,¹ and there are even traces of it in marriage customs.²

The ground of this seclusion of girls at puberty lies in the deeply engrained dread which primitive man universally entertains of menstruous blood. Evidence of this has already been given,³ but a few more facts may here be added. Amongst the Australian blacks "the boys are told from their infancy that, if they see the blood, they will early become gray-headed, and their strength will fail prematurely." Hence a woman lives apart at these times; and if a young man or boy approaches her she calls out, and he immediately makes a circuit to avoid her. The men go out of their way to avoid even crossing the tracks made by women at such times. Similarly the woman may not walk on any path frequented by men, nor touch anything used by men; she may not eat fish, or go near water at all, much less cross it; for if she did, the fish would be frightened, and the fishers would have no luck; she may not even fetch water for the camp; it is sufficient for her to say *Thama* to ensure her husband fetching the water himself. A severe beating, or even death, is the punishment inflicted on an Australian

¹ Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, i. 416, vi. 25; Turner, *Samoa*, p. 200; *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 148, § 797; A. Pfizmaier, "Nachrichten von den alten Bewohnern des heutigen Corea," *Sitzungsberichte der philos.-histor. Classe d. kais. Akademie der Wissenschaft* (Vienna), lvii. (1868), p. 495 sq.

² Amongst the Chaco Indians of South America a newly-married couple sleep the first night on a skin with their heads towards the west; "for the marriage is not considered as ratified till the rising sun shines on their feet the succeeding morning" (T. J. Hutchinson, "The Chaco Indians," *Transact. Ethnolog. Soc. N.S.*, iii. (1865), p. 327). At old Hindoo marriages, the first ceremony was the "impregnation-rite" (*Garbhādhāna*). "During the previous day the young married woman was made to look

towards the sun, or in some way exposed to its rays" (Monier Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India*, p. 354). Amongst the Turks of Siberia it was formerly the custom on the morning after marriage to lead the young couple out of the hut to greet the rising sun. The same custom is said to be still practised in Iran and Central Asia, the belief being that the beams of the rising sun are the surest means of impregnating the new bride (Vambery, *Das Türkenvolk*, p. 112). The Greenlanders attribute the same power of impregnation to the moon, which they regard as a masculine being. Hence young girls are afraid to look long at it, and no Greenland woman will sleep on her back unless she has first spat upon her fingers and rubbed the spittle on her stomach (H. Egede, *Description of Greenland*, London, 1818, p. 209).

³ Above, vol. i. p. 325 sq.

woman who breaks these rules.¹ The Dieri of Central Australia believe that if women at these times were to eat fish or bathe in a river, the fish would all die and the water would dry up. In this tribe a mark made with red ochre round a woman's mouth indicates that she has her courses; no one would offer fish to such a woman.² Other Central Australian tribes will not allow menstruous women to gather a certain bulb, which forms a staple food of these people; they think that if the rule were broken, the supply of bulbs would fail.³ In Galela women at their monthly periods may not enter a tobacco-field, or the plants would be attacked by disease.⁴ The Minangkabauers of Sumatra are persuaded that if a woman in her unclean state were to go near a rice-field, the crop would be spoiled.⁵ The Bushmen think that, by a glance of a girl's eye at the time when she ought to be kept in strict retirement, men become fixed in whatever position they happen to occupy, with whatever they were holding in their hands, and are changed into trees which talk.⁶ Cattle-rearing tribes of South Africa hold that their cattle would die if the milk were drunk by a menstruous woman; and lest they should suddenly be overtaken by their infirmity, women are forbidden to enter the villages by the paths which the men use.⁷ According to the Talmud, if a woman at the beginning of her period passes between two men, she thereby kills one of them; if she passes between them towards the end of her period, she only causes them to quarrel violently.⁸

¹ *Native Tribes of South Australia*, p. 186; E. J. Fyfe, *Journals*, ii. 295, 304; W. Ridley, *Kamilaroi*, p. 157; *id.*, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* ii. (1873), p. 268; W. E. Armit, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* ix. (1880), p. 459 sq.; Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, i. 65, 236. Cp. Sir George Grey, *Journals*, ii. 344; J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. ci. 19.

² S. Gason, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895), p. 171.

³ Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 473.

⁴ M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-*

Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië, xlv. (1893), p. 489.

⁵ J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij des Minangkabauer der Padagsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxix. (1890), p. 66.

⁶ Bleek, *Brief Account of Bushman Folk-lore*, p. 14; cp. *ibid.* p. 10.

⁷ J. Macdonald, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xx. (1891), p. 138; *id.*, *Light in Africa*, p. 221; *id.*, *Religion and Myth*, p. 198.

⁸ J. Mergel, *Die Medizin der Talmudisten* (Leipsic and Berlin, 1885), p. 15 sq.

The miraculous virtue ascribed to menstuous blood is well illustrated in a story told by the Arab chronicler Tabari. He relates how Sapor, king of Persia, besieged the strong city of Atrac, in the desert of Mesopotamia, for several years without being able to take it. But the king of the city, whose name was Daizan, had a daughter, and when it was with her after the manner of women she went forth from the city and dwelt for a time in the suburb, for such was the custom of the place. Now it fell out that, while she tarried there, Sapor saw her and loved her, and she loved him; for he was a handsome man and she a lovely maid. And she said to him, "What will you give me if I show you how you may destroy the walls of this city and slay my father?" And he said to her, "I will give you what you will, and I will exalt you above my other wives, and will set you nearer to me than them all." Then she said to him, "Take a greenish dove with a ring about its neck, and write something on its foot with the menstuous blood of a blue-eyed maid; then let the bird loose, and it will perch on the walls of the city, and they will fall down." For that, says the Arab historian, was the talisman of the city, which could not be destroyed in any other way. And Sapor did as she bade him, and the city fell down in a heap, and he stormed it and slew Daizan on the spot.¹

The Parscees, who reverence fire, will not suffer menstuous women to see it or even to look on a lighted taper.² Maimonides tells us that down to his time it was a common custom in the East to keep women at their periods in a separate house, and to burn everything on which they had trodden; a man who spoke with such a woman or who was merely exposed to the same wind that blew over her, became thereby unclean.³ In Syria to this day a woman who

¹ Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden, aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetzt* (Leyden, 1879), pp. 33-38. I have to thank my friend Prof. A. A. Bevan for pointing out to me this and the passage referred to in the next note. Many ancient cities had talismans on the preservation of which their safety was believed to depend. The Palla-

dium of Troy is the most familiar instance. See Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 278 sqq., and my note on Pausanias, viii. 47. 5.

² G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus Syrischen Akten persischer Martyrer übersetzt* (Leipzig, 1880), p. 99.

³ Maimonides, translated by Chwolson, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, ii. 483.

has her courses on her may neither salt nor pickle, for the people think that whatever she pickled or salted would not keep.¹ The Toaripi of New Guinea, doubtless for a similar reason, will not allow women at such times to cook.² The Bhuiyars, a Dravidian tribe of South Mirzapur, are said to feel an intense dread of menstrual pollution. Every house has two doors, one of which is used only by women in this condition. During her impurity the wife is fed by her husband apart from the rest of the family, and whenever she has to quit the house she is obliged to creep out on her hands and knees in order not to defile the thatch by her touch.³ The Kharwars, another aboriginal tribe of the same district, keep their women at such seasons in the outer verandah of the house for eight days, and will not let them enter the kitchen or the cow-house; during this time the unclean woman may not cook nor even touch the cooking vessels. When the eight days are over, she bathes, washes her clothes, and returns to family life.⁴

The Guayquiries of the Orinoco think that, when a woman has her courses, everything upon which she steps will die, and that if a man treads on the place where she has passed, his legs will immediately swell up.⁵ The Creek and kindred Indians of the United States compelled women at menstruation to live in separate huts at some distance from the village. There the women had to stay, at the risk of being surprised and cut off by enemies. It was thought "a most horrid and dangerous pollution" to go near the women at such times; and the danger extended to enemies who, if they slew the women, had to cleanse themselves from the pollution by means of certain sacred herbs and roots.⁶ Similarly, the Choctaw women had to quit their huts during their monthly periods, and might not return till after they had been purified. While their uncleanness lasted they had to prepare their own food. The men believed that if they

¹ Eijūb Abēla, "Beiträge zur Kenntnis abergläubischer Gebräuche in Syrien," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, vii. (1884), p. 111.
² J. Chalmers, "Toaripi," *Journal the Anthropol. Institute*, xxvii. (1898), 321f.

the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, ii. 87.

⁴ W. Crooke, in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, i. p. 67, § 467.

⁵ Gumilla, *Histoire de l'Orénoque* (Avignon, 1758), i. 249.

⁶ James Adair, *History of the American Indians*, p. 123 sq.

³ W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of*

were to approach a menstruous woman, they would fall ill, and that some mishap would overtake them when they went to the wars.¹ When an Omaha woman has her courses on her, she retires from the family to a little shelter of bark or grass, supported by sticks, where she kindles a fire and cooks her victuals alone. Her seclusion lasts four days. During this time she may not approach or touch a horse, for the Indians believe that such contamination would impoverish or weaken the animal.² Among the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia every woman had to isolate herself from the rest of the people during every recurring period of menstruation, and had to live some little way off in a small brush or bark lodge made for the purpose. At these times she was considered unclean, must use cooking and eating utensils of her own, and was supplied with food by some other woman. If she smoked out of a pipe other than her own, that pipe would ever afterwards be hot to smoke. If she crossed in front of a gun, that gun would thenceforth be useless for the war or the chase, unless indeed the owner promptly washed the weapon in "medecine" or struck the woman with it once on each principal part of her body. If a man ate or had any intercourse with a menstruous woman, nay if he merely wore clothes or moccasins made or patched by her, he would have bad luck in hunting and the bears would attack him fiercely. Before being admitted again among the people, she had to change all her clothes and wash several times in clear water. The clothes worn during her isolation were hung on a tree, to be used next time, or to be washed. For one day after coming back among the people, she did not cook food. Were a man to eat food cooked by a woman at such times, he would have incapacitated himself for hunting and exposed himself to sickness or death.³ Among the Chippeways and other Indians of the Hudson Bay Territory, menstruous women are excluded from the camp, and take up their abode in huts of branches. They wear long hoods, which effectually conceal

¹ Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), ii. 105.

² E. James, *Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*, i. 214.

³ James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. ii. part iv. (April 1900) p. 326 sq.

the head and breast. They may not touch the household furniture nor any objects used by men; for their touch "is supposed to defile them, so that their subsequent use would be followed by certain mischief or misfortune," such as disease or death. They may not walk on the common paths nor cross the tracks of animals. They "are never permitted to walk on the ice of rivers or lakes, or near the part where the men are hunting beaver, or where a fishing-net is set, for fear of averting their success. They are also prohibited at those times from partaking of the head of any animal, and even from walking in or crossing the track where the head of a deer, moose, beaver, and many other animals have lately been carried, either on a sledge or on the back. To be guilty of a violation of this custom is considered as of the greatest importance; because they firmly believe that it would be a means of preventing the hunter from having an equal success in his future excursions."¹ So the Lapps forbid women at menstruation to walk on that part of the shore where the fishers are in the habit of setting out their fish.²

But the beliefs and superstitions of this sort that prevail among the western tribes of the great Déné or Tinnéh stock, to which the Chippeways belong, have been so well described by an experienced missionary, that I will give his description in his own words. Prominent among the ceremonial rites of these Indians, he says, "are the observances peculiar to the fair sex, and many of them are remarkably analogous to those practised by the Hebrew women, so much so that, were it not savouring of profanity, the ordinances of the Déné ritual code might be termed a new edition 'revised and considerably augmented' of the Mosaic ceremonial law. Among the Carriers,"³ as soon as a girl had experienced the first flow of the menses which in the female constitution are a natural

¹ S. Hecarne, *Journey to the Northern Ocean*, p. 314 sq.; Alex. Mackenzie, *Voyages through the Continent of North America* (London, 1801), p. cxxiii.; Petitot, *Monographie des Déné-Dindjé*, p. 75 sq.

² C. Leemius, *De Laponibus Finmarchiacorumque lingua vita et re-*

ligione pristina (Copenhagen, 1767), p. 494.

³ The Carriers are a tribe of Déné or Tinnéh Indians who get their name from a custom observed among them by widows, who carry the charred bones of their dead husbands about with them in bundles.

discharge, her father believed himself under the obligation of atoning for her supposedly sinful condition by a small impromptu distribution of clothes among the natives. This periodical state of women was considered as one of legal impurity fateful both to the man who happened to have any intercourse, however indirect, with her, and to the woman herself who failed in scrupulously observing all the rites prescribed by ancient usage for persons in her condition.

"Upon entering into that stage of her life, the maiden was immediately sequestered from company, even that of her parents, and compelled to dwell in a small branch hut by herself away from beaten paths and the gaze of passers-by. As she was supposed to exercise malefic influence on any man who might inadvertently glance at her, she had to wear a sort of head-dress combining in itself the purposes of a veil, a bonnet, and a mantlet. It was made of tanned skin, its forepart was shaped like a long fringe completely hiding from view the face and breasts; then it formed on the head a close-fitting cap or bonnet, and finally fell in a broad band almost to the heels. This head-dress was made and publicly placed on her head by a paternal aunt, who received at once some present from the girl's father. When three or four years later the period of sequestration ceased, only this same aunt had the right to take off her niece's ceremonial head-dress. Furthermore, the girl's fingers, wrists, and legs at the ankles and immediately below the knees, were encircled with ornamental rings and bracelets of sinew intended as a protection against the malign influences she was supposed to be possessed with.¹ To a belt girding her waist were suspended two bone implements called respectively *Tsoenkuz* (bone tube) and *Tsiltsoet* (head scratcher). The former was a hollowed swan bone to drink with, any other mode of drinking being unlawful to her. The latter was fork-like and was called into requisition whenever she wanted to scratch her head—immediate contact of the fingers with the head being reputed injurious to her health. While thus secluded, she was called *asta*, that is 'interred alive' in Carrier, and she had to submit to a

¹ Hence we may conjecture that the girls in similar circumstances are also similar ornaments worn by Malvung amulets. See above, p. 207.

rigorous fast and abstinence. Her only allowed food consisted of dried fish boiled in a small bark vessel which nobody else must touch, and she had to abstain especially from meat of any kind, as well as fresh fish. Nor was this all she had to endure; even her contact, however remote, with these two articles of diet was so dreaded that she could not cross the public paths or trails, or the tracks of animals. Whenever absolute necessity constrained her to go beyond such spots, she had to be packed or carried over them lest she should contaminate the game or meat which had passed that way, or had been brought over these paths; and also for the sake of self-preservation against tabooed, and consequently to her, deleterious food. In the same way she was never allowed to wade in streams or lakes, for fear of causing death to the fish.

"It was also a prescription of the ancient ritual code for females during this primary condition to eat as little as possible, and to remain lying down, especially in course of each monthly flow, not only as a natural consequence of the prolonged fast and resulting weakness; but chiefly as an exhibition of a becoming penitential spirit which was believed to be rewarded by long life and continual good health in after years.

"These mortifications or seclusion did not last less than three or four years. Useless to say that during all that time marriage could not be thought of, since the girl could not so much as be seen by men. When married, the same sequestration was practised relatively to husband and fellow-villagers—without the particular head-dress and ring spoken of—on the occasion of every recurring menstruation. Sometimes it was protracted as long as ten days at a time, especially during the first years of cohabitation. Even when she returned to her mate, she was not permitted to sleep with him on the first nor frequently on the second night, but would choose a distant corner of the lodge to spread her blanket, as if afraid to defile him with her dread uncleanness."¹ Elsewhere the same writer tells us that most of

¹ A. G. Morice, "The Western
Dénés, their manners and customs,"
Proceedings of the Canadian Institute,

Toronto, Third Series, vii. (1888-89),
pp. 162-164. The writer has repeated
the substance of this account in a later

the devices to which these Indians used to resort for the sake of ensuring success in the chase "were based on their regard for continence and their excessive repugnance for, and dread of, menstruating women."¹ But the strict observances imposed on Déné women at such times were designed at the same time to protect the women themselves from the evil consequences of their dangerous condition. Thus it was thought that women in their courses could not partake of the head, heart, or hind part of an animal that had been caught in a snare without exposing themselves to a premature death through a kind of rabies. They might not cut or carve salmon, because to do so would seriously endanger their health, and especially would enfeeble their arms for life. And they had to abstain from cutting up the grebes which are caught by the Carriers in great numbers every spring, because otherwise the blood with which these fowls abound would occasion hæmorrhage or an unnaturally prolonged flux in the transgressor.² Similarly Indian women of the Thompson River tribe abstained from venison and the flesh of other large game during menstruation, lest the animals should be displeased and the menstrual flow increased.³ For a similar reason, probably, Shushwap girls during their seclusion at puberty are forbidden to eat anything that bleeds.⁴ The same principle may perhaps partly explain the rule, of which we have had some examples, that women at such times should refrain from fish and flesh, and restrict themselves to a vegetable diet.

The philosophic student of human nature will observe, or learn, without surprise that ideas thus deeply ingrained in the savage mind reappear at a more advanced stage of society in those elaborate codes which have been drawn up for the guidance of certain peoples by lawgivers who claim

work, *An pays de l'Ours Noir: chez les sauvages de la Colombie Britannique* (Paris and Lyons, 1897), p. 72 sq.

¹ A. G. Morice, "Notes, archaeological, industrial, and sociological, on the Western Dénés," *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, iv. (1892-93), p. 106 sq.

² A. G. Morice, in *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, iv. (1892-93),

pp. 107, 110.

³ James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. ii. part iv. (April 1900), p. 327.

⁴ Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 89 (separate reprint from the *Report of the Brit. Assoc. for 1890*).

to have derived the rules they inculcate from the direct inspiration of the deity. However we may explain it, the resemblance which exists between the earliest official utterances of the deity and the ideas of savages is unquestionably close and remarkable; whether it be, as some suppose, that God communed face to face with man in those early days, or, as others maintain, that man mistook his wild and wandering thoughts for a revelation from heaven. Be this as it may, certain it is that the natural uncleanness of woman at her monthly periods is a conception which has occurred or been revealed with singular unanimity to several ancient legislators. The Hindoo lawgiver Manu, who professed to have received his institutes from the creator Brahman, informs us that the wisdom, the energy, the strength, the sight, and the vitality of a man who approaches a woman in her courses will utterly perish; whereas, if he avoids her, his wisdom, energy, strength, sight, and vitality will all increase.¹ The Persian lawgiver Zoroaster, who, if we can take his word for it, derived his code from the mouth of the supreme being Ahura Mazda, devoted special attention to the subject. According to him, the menstruous flow, at least in its abnormal manifestations, is a work of Ahriman, or the devil. Therefore, so long as it lasts, a woman "is unclean and possessed of the demon; she must be kept confined, apart from the faithful whom her touch would defile, and from the fire which her very look would injure; she is not allowed to eat as much as she wishes, as the strength she might acquire would accrue to the fiends. Her food is not given her from hand to hand, but is passed to her from a distance, in a long leaden spoon."² The Hebrew lawgiver Moses, whose divine legation is as little open to question as that of Manu and Zoroaster, treats the subject at still greater length; but I must leave to the reader the task of comparing the inspired ordinances on this head with the merely human regulations of the Carrier Indians which they so closely resemble.

Amongst the civilised nations of Europe the superstitions which cluster round this mysterious aspect of

¹ *Laws of Manu*, translated by G. Bühler, ch. iv. 41 sq., p. 135.

² J. Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta*, i. p. xcii. See *Fargard*, i. 18 and 19, xvi. 1-18.

woman's nature are not less extravagant than those which prevail among savages. In the oldest existing cyclopaedia—the *Natural History* of Pliny—the list of dangers apprehended from menstruation is longer than any furnished by mere barbarians. According to Pliny, the touch of a menstruous woman turned wine to vinegar, blighted crops, killed seedlings, blasted gardens, brought down the fruit from trees, dimmed mirrors, blunted razors, rusted iron and brass (especially at the waning of the moon), killed bees, or at least drove them from their hives, caused mares to miscarry, and so forth.¹ Similarly, in various parts of Europe, it is still believed that if a woman in her courses enters a brewery the beer will turn sour; if she touches beer, wine, vinegar, or milk it will go bad; if she makes jam, it will not keep; if she mounts a mare, it will miscarry; if she touches buds, they will wither; if she climbs a cherry tree, it will die.² In Brunswick people think that if a menstruous woman assists at the killing of a pig, the pork will putrefy.³ In the Greek island of Calymnos a woman at such times may not go to the well to draw water, nor cross a running stream, nor enter the sea. Her presence in a boat is said to raise storms.⁴

Thus the object of secluding women at menstruation is to neutralise the dangerous influences which are supposed to emanate from them at such times. That the danger is believed to be especially great at the first menstruation appears from the unusual precautions taken to isolate girls at this crisis. Two of these precautions have been illustrated above, namely, the rules that the girl may not touch the

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 64 sq., xxviii. 77 sqq. Cp. *Geoponica*, xii. 20. 5 and 25. 2; Columella, xi. 3. 50.

² A. Schleicher, *Volkswirtschaftliches aus Sonnenberg*, p. 134; B. Souché, *Croyances, Préjugés et Traditions diverses*, p. 11; A. Meyrac, *Traditions, Coutumes, Légendes et Contes des Ardennes* (Charleville, 1890), p. 171; V. Fossel, *Volkmedizin und medicinischer Aberglaube in Steiermark* (Graz, 1886), p. 124. A correspondent, who withholds her name, writes to me that in a Suffolk village, where she used to live

some twenty or thirty years ago, "every one pickled their own beef, and it was held that if the pickling were performed by a woman during her menstrual period the meat would not keep." If the cook were incapacitated at the time when the pickling was due, another woman was sent for out of the village rather than risk what was considered a certainty."

³ R. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde*, p. 291.

⁴ W. R. Paton, in *Folklore*, i. (1890), p. 524.

ground nor see the sun. The general effect of these rules is to keep the girl suspended, so to say, between heaven and earth. Whether enveloped in her hammock and slung up to the roof, as in South America, or raised above the ground in a dark and narrow cage, as in New Ireland, she may be considered to be out of the way of doing mischief, since, being shut off both from the earth and from the sun, she can poison neither of these great sources of life by her deadly contagion. In short, she is rendered harmless by being, in electrical language, insulated. But the precautions thus taken to isolate or insulate the girl are dictated by a regard for her own safety as well as for the safety of others. For it is thought that the girl herself would suffer if she were to neglect the prescribed regimen. Thus Zulu girls, as we have seen, believe that they would shrivel to skeletons if the sun were to shine on them at puberty, and in some Brazilian tribes the girls think that a transgression of the rules would entail sores on the neck and throat. In short, the girl is viewed as charged with a powerful force which, if not kept within bounds, may prove destructive both to the girl herself and to all with whom she comes in contact. To repress this force within the limits necessary for the safety of all concerned is the object of the taboos in question.

The same explanation applies to the observance of the same rules by divine kings and priests. The uncleanness, as it is called, of girls at puberty and the sanctity of holy men do not, to the primitive mind, differ from each other. They are only different manifestations of the same mysterious energy which, like energy in general, is in itself neither good nor bad, but becomes beneficent or maleficent according to its application.¹ Accordingly, if, like girls at puberty, divine

¹ The Greeks and Romans thought that a field was completely protected against insects if a menstruous woman walked round it with bare feet and streaming hair (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xvii. 266, xxviii. 78; Columella, x. 358 sq., xi. 3. 64; Palladius, *De re rustica*, i. 35. 3; *Geoponica*, xii. 8. 5 sq.; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* vi. 36). A similar preventive is employed for the same purpose by North American Indians and European peasants. See School-

craft, *Indian Tribes*, v. 70; Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren und äusseren Leben der Ebsten*, p. 484. Cp. Hattich, *Zur Volkskunde der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, p. 280; Heinrich, *Agriatische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens*, p. 14; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ iii. 468; Lammerl, *Volkmedicin aus Bayern*, p. 147. Among the Western Dénés it is believed that one or two transverse lines tattooed on the arms or legs of a young

personages may neither touch the ground nor see the sun, the reason is, on the one hand, a fear lest their divinity might, at contact with earth or heaven, discharge itself with fatal violence on either; and, on the other hand, an apprehension that the divine being, thus drained of his ethereal virtue, might thereby be incapacitated for the future performance of those magical functions, upon the proper discharge of which the safety of the people and even of the world is believed to hang. Thus the rules in question fall under the head of the taboos which we examined in the second chapter; they are intended to preserve the life of the divine person and with it the life of his subjects and worshippers. Nowhere, it is thought, can his precious yet dangerous life be at once so safe and so harmless as when it is neither in heaven nor in earth, but, as far as possible, suspended between the two.

In legends and folk-tales, which reflect the ideas of earlier ages, we find this suspension between heaven and earth attributed to beings who have been endowed with the coveted yet burdensome gift of immortality. The wizened remains of the deathless Sibyl are said to have been preserved in a jar or urn which hung in a temple of Apollo at Cumæ; and when a group of merry children, tired, perhaps, of playing in the sunny streets, sought the shade of the temple and amused themselves by gathering underneath the familiar jar and calling out, "Sibyl, what do you wish?" a hollow voice, like an echo, used to answer from the urn, "I wish to die."¹ A story, taken down from the lips of a

man by a pubescent girl are a specific against premature weakness of these limbs. See A. G. Morice, "Notes, archaeological, industrial, and sociological, on the Western Dénés," *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, iv. (1892-93), p. 182. The Thompson River Indians of British Columbia thought that the Dawn of Day could and would cure hernia if only an adolescent girl prayed to it to do so. Just before day-break the girl would put some charcoal in her mouth, chew it fine, and spit it out four times on the diseased place. Then she prayed: "O Day-dawn? thy child relies on me to obtain healing

from thee, who art mystery. Remove thou the swelling of thy child. Pity thou him, Day-dawn?" See James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. ii. part iv. (April 1900), p. 345 *sq.* These are examples of the beneficent application of the menstruous energy.

¹ Petronius, *Sat.* 48; Pausanias, x. 12. 8; Justin Martyr, *Cohort. ad Græcos*, 37, p. 34 c, ed. 1742. According to another account, the remains of the Sibyl were enclosed in an iron cage which hung from a pillar in

German peasant at Thomsdorf, relates that once upon a time there was a girl in London who wished to live for ever, so they say :

" London, London is a fine town.
A maiden prayed to live for ever."

And still she lives and hangs in a basket in a church, and every St. John's Day, about the hour of noon, she eats a roll of bread.¹ Another German story tells of a lady who resided at Danzig and was so rich and so blest with all that life can give that she wished to live always. So when she came to her latter end, she did not really die but only looked like dead, and very soon they found her in a hollow of a pillar in the church, half standing and half sitting, motionless. She stirred never a limb, but they saw quite plainly that she was alive, and she sits there down to this blessed day. Every New Year's Day the sacristan comes and puts a morsel of the holy bread in her mouth, and that is all she has to live on. Long, long has she rued her fatal wish who set this transient life above the eternal joys of heaven.² A third German story tells of a noble damsel who cherished the same foolish wish for immortality. So they put her in a basket and hung her up in a church, and there she hangs and never dies, though many a year has come and gone since they put her there. But every year on a certain day they give her a roll, and she eats it and cries out, " For ever ! for ever ! for ever ! " And when she has so cried she falls silent again till the same time next year, and so it will go on for ever and for ever.³ A fourth story, taken down near Oldenburg in Holstein, tells of a jolly dame that ate and drank and lived right merrily and had all that heart could desire, and she wished to live always. For the first hundred years all went well, but after that she began to shrink and shrivel up, till at last

an ancient temple of Hercules at Argyrus (Ampelius, *Liber Memorialis*, viii. 16).

¹ Kuhn und Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 70, No. 72. 1. This and the following German parallels to the story of the Sibyl's wish were first indicated by Dr.

M. R. James (*Classical Review*, vi. (1892), p. 74). I have already given the stories at length in a note on Pausanias, x. 12. 8.

² Kuhn und Schwartz, *op. cit.* p. 70 sq., No. 72. 2.

³ Kuhn und Schwartz, *op. cit.* p. 71, No. 72. 3.

she could neither walk nor stand nor eat nor drink. But die she could not. At first they fed her as if she were a little child, but when she grew smaller and smaller they put her in a glass bottle and hung her up in the church. And there she still hangs, in the church of St. Mary, at Lübeck. She is as small as a mouse, but once a year she stirs.¹

§ 2. Balder

A god whose life might in a sense be said to be neither in heaven nor on earth but between the two, was the Norse Balder, the good and beautiful god. The story of his death is as follows: Once on a time Balder dreamed heavy dreams which seemed to forebode his death. Thereupon the gods held a council and resolved to make him secure against every danger. So the goddess Frigg took an oath from fire and water, iron and all metals, stones and earth, from trees, sicknesses and poisons, and from all four-footed beasts, birds, and creeping things, that they would not hurt Balder. When this was done Balder was deemed invulnerable; so the gods amused themselves by setting him in their midst, while some shot at him, others hewed at him, and others threw stones at him. But whatever they did, nothing could hurt him; and at this they were all glad. Only Loki, the mischief-maker, was displeased, and he went in the guise of an old woman to Frigg, who told him that the weapons of the gods could not wound Balder, since she had made them all swear not to hurt him. Then Loki asked, "Have all things sworn to spare Balder?" She answered, "East of Walhalla grows a plant called mistletoe; it seemed to me too young to swear." So Loki went and pulled the mistletoe and took it to the assembly of the gods. There he found the blind god Hödur standing at the outside of the circle. Loki asked him, "Why do you not shoot at Balder?" Hödur answered, "Because I do not see where he stands; besides I have no weapon." Then said Loki, "Do like the rest and show Balder honour, as they all do. I will show you where he stands, and do you shoot at him

¹ K. Müllenhoff, *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder*, p. 158 sq., No. 217.

On this subject see further Note A at the end of the volume.

with this twig." Hödur took the mistletoe and threw it at Balder, as Loki directed him. The mistletoe struck Balder and pierced him through and through, and he fell down dead. And that was the greatest misfortune that ever befell gods and men. For a while the gods stood speechless, then they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. They took Balder's body and brought it to the sea-shore. There stood Balder's ship; it was called Ringhorn, and was the hugest of all ships. The gods wished to launch the ship and to burn Balder's body on it, but the ship would not stir. So they sent for a giantess called Hyrrockin. She came riding on a wolf and gave the ship such a push that fire flashed from the rollers and all the earth shook. Then Balder's body was taken and placed on the funeral pile upon his ship. When his wife Nanna saw that, her heart burst for sorrow and she died. So she was laid on the funeral pile with her husband, and fire was put to it. Balder's horse, too, with all its trappings, was burned on the pile.¹

The minute details with which this story is told suggest that it belongs to that class of myths which have been dramatised in ritual, or, to put it otherwise, which have been performed as magical ceremonies for the sake of producing those natural effects which they describe in figurative language. A myth is never so graphic and precise in its details as when it is, so to speak, the book of the words which are spoken and acted by the performers of the sacred rite. That the Norse story of Balder was a myth of this sort will become probable if we can prove that ceremonies resembling the incidents in the tale have been performed by Norsemen and other European peoples. Now the main incidents in the tale are two—first, the pulling of the mistletoe, and second, the death and burning of the god; and both of them can be shown to have had their counterparts in yearly rites observed, whether separately or conjointly, by people in various parts of Europe.

All over Europe the peasants have been accustomed from time immemorial to kindle bonfires on certain

¹ *Die Edda*, übersetzt von K. Simrock,⁸ pp. 286-288, cp. pp. 8, 34, 264. In English the Balder story is told at

length by Prof. Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom*, p. 529 sqq.

days of the year, and to dance round or leap over them. Customs of this kind can be traced back on historical evidence to the Middle Ages,¹ and their analogy to similar customs observed in antiquity goes with strong internal evidence to prove that their origin must be sought in a period long prior to the spread of Christianity. Indeed the earliest proof of their observance in Northern Europe is furnished by the attempts made by Christian synods in the eighth century to put them down as heathenish rites.² Not uncommonly effigies are burned in these fires, or a pretence is made of burning a living person in them; and there are grounds for believing that anciently human beings were actually burned on these occasions. A general survey of the customs in question will bring out the traces of human sacrifice, and will serve at the same time to throw light on their meaning.³

The seasons of the year at which these bonfires are most commonly lit are spring and midsummer, but in some places they are kindled at Hallow E'en (the thirty-first of October) and Christmas. In spring the first Sunday in Lent (Quadragesima), Easter Eve, and the first of May are the days on which the ceremony has been oftenest observed.

The custom of kindling bonfires on the first Sunday in Lent has prevailed in Belgium, the north of France, and in many parts of Germany. Thus in the Belgian Ardennes for a week or a fortnight before the "day of the great fire," as it is called, children go about from farm to farm collecting fuel. At Grand Halleux any one who refuses their request is pursued next day by the children, who try to blacken his face with the ashes of the extinct fire. When the day has come, they cut down bushes, especially juniper and broom, and in the evening great bonfires blaze on all the heights. It is a common saying that seven bonfires should be seen if the village is to be safe from conflagrations. If the Meuse

¹ See Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ i. 502, 510, 516.

² Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 518 sq.

³ In the following survey of these fire-customs I follow chiefly W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, kap. vi. p. 497

sqq. Compare also Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,³ i. 500 sqq.; Kelly, *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore*, p. 46 sqq.; F. Vogt, "Scheibentreiben und Frühlingsfeuer," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, iii. (1893), pp. 349-369; *ibid.* iv. (1894), pp. 195-197.

happens to be frozen hard at the time, bonfires are lit also on the ice. At Grand Halleux they set up a pole called *makral*, or "the witch," in the midst of the pile, and the fire is kindled by the man who was last married in the village. In the neighbourhood of Morlanwelz a straw man is burnt in the fire. Young people and children dance and sing round the bonfires, and leap over the embers to secure good crops or a happy marriage within the year, or as a means of guarding themselves against colic. In Brabant on the same Sunday, down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, women and men disguised in female attire used to go with burning torches to the fields, where they danced and sang comic songs for the purpose, as they alleged, of driving away "the wicked sower," who is mentioned in the Gospel for the day.¹

In the French department of the Ardennes the whole village used to dance and sing round the bonfires which were lighted on the first Sunday in Lent. Here, too, it was the person last married, sometimes a man and sometimes a woman, who put the match to the fire. The custom is still kept up very commonly in the district. Cats used to be burnt in the fire or roasted to death by being held over it; and while they were burning the shepherds drove their flocks through the smoke and flames as a sure means of guarding them against sickness and witchcraft. In some communes it was believed that the livelier the dance round the fire, the better would be the crops that year.² In the Vosges Mountains it is still customary to light great fires on the heights and around the villages on the first Sunday in Lent; and at Rupt and elsewhere the right of kindling them belongs to the person who was last married. Round the fires the people dance and sing merrily till the flames have died out. Then the master of the fire, as they call the man who kindled it, invites all who contributed to the erection of the pile to follow him to the nearest tavern, where they partake of good cheer. At Dommartin they say that, if you would have the hemp tall, it is absolutely necessary

¹ Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Calendriers Belges*, i. 141-143; E. Monseur, *Le Folklore Wallon*, p. 124 sq.

² A. Meyrac, *Traditions, coutumes, légendes et contes des Ardennes* (Charleville, 1890), p. 68.

that the women should be tipsy on the evening of this day.¹ At Épinal in the Vosges, on the first Sunday in Lent, bon-fires used to be kindled at various places both in the town and on the banks of the Moselle. They consisted of pyramids of sticks and faggots, which had been collected some days earlier by young folks going from door to door. When the flames blazed up, the names of various couples, whether young or old, handsome or ugly, rich or poor, were called out, and the persons thus linked in mock marriage were forced, whether they liked it or not, to march arm in arm round the fire amid the laughter and jests of the crowd. The festivity lasted till the fire died out, and then the spectators dispersed through the streets, stopping under the windows of the houses and proclaiming the names of the *fêchenots* and *fêchenottes* or Valentines whom the popular voice had assigned to each other. These couples had to exchange presents; the mock bridegroom gave his mock bride something for her toilet, while she in turn presented him with a cockade of coloured ribbon. Next Sunday, if the weather allowed it, all the couples, arrayed in their best attire and attended by their relations, repaired to the wood of Saint Antony, where they mounted a famous stone called the *danserosse* or *danseresse*. Here they found cakes and refreshments of all sorts, and danced to the music of a couple of fiddlers. The evening bell, ringing the Angelus, gave the signal to depart. As soon as its solemn chime was heard, every one quitted the forest and returned home. The exchange of presents between the Valentines went by the name of ransom or redemption (*rachat*), because it was supposed to redeem the couple from the flames of the bon-fire. Any pair who failed thus to ransom themselves were not suffered to share the merrymaking at the great stone in the forest; and a pretence was made of burning them in small fires kindled before their own doors.²

In some parts of France people used to go about the roads and fields with lighted torches on the first Sunday in Lent, warning the fruit-trees that if they did not take heed and bear fruit they would surely be cut down and cast into the

¹ L. F. Sauvé, *Le Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 56.

² E. Cortet, *Essai sur les fêtes religieuses*, p. 101 sq.

fire.¹ On the same day peasants in the department of Loiret used to run about the sowed fields with burning torches in their hands, while they adjured the field-mice to quit the wheat on pain of having their whiskers burned.² In the department of Ain the great fires of straw and faggots which are kindled in the fields at this time are or were supposed to destroy the nests of the caterpillars.³ At Verges, a lonely village surrounded by forests between the Jura and the Combe d'Ain, the torches used at this season were kindled in a peculiar manner. The young people climbed to the top of a mountain, where they placed three nests of straw in three trees. These nests being then set on fire, torches made of dry lime-wood were lighted at them, and the merry troop descended the mountain to their flickering light, and went to every house in the village, demanding roasted peas and obliging all couples who had been married within the year to dance.⁴ In the centre of France it appears that bonfires are not lighted on this day, but when the sun has set the whole population of the villages, armed with blazing torches of straw, disperse over the country and scour the fields, the vineyards, and the orchards. Seen from afar, the multitude of moving lights, twinkling in the darkness, appear like will-o'-the-wisps chasing each other across the plains, along the hillsides, and down the valleys. While the men wave their flambeaus about the branches of the fruit-trees, the women and children tie bands of wheaten-straw round the tree-trunks. The effect of the ceremony is supposed to be to avert the various plagues from which the fruits of the earth are apt to suffer; and the bands of straw fastened round the stems of the trees are believed to render them fruitful.⁵ In the peninsula of La Manche the Norman peasants used to spend almost the whole night of the first Sunday in Lent rushing about the country with lighted torches for the purpose, as they supposed, of driving away the moles and field-mice; fires were also kindled on some of the dolmens.⁶

¹ Cortet, *op. cit.* p. 99 sq.

² A. de Nore, *Contumes, mythes et traditions des provinces de France*, p. 283 sq. A similar, though not identical, custom prevailed at Valenciennes (*ibid.* p. 338).

³ A. de Nore, *op. cit.* p. 302.

⁴ D. Monnier, *Traditions populaires comparées*, p. 191 sq.

⁵ Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et légendes du centre de la France*, i. 35 sqq.

⁶ Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage*

In Germany at the same season similar customs have prevailed. Thus in the Eifel Mountains, Rhenish Prussia, on the first Sunday in Lent young people used to collect straw and brushwood from house to house. These they carried to an eminence and piled up round a tall, slim beech-tree, to which a piece of wood was fastened at right angles to form a cross. The structure was known as the "hut" or "castle." Fire was set to it and the young people marched round the blazing "castle" bareheaded, each carrying a lighted torch and praying aloud. Sometimes a straw-man was burned in the "hut." People observed the direction in which the smoke blew from the fire. If it blew towards the corn-fields, it was a sign that the harvest would be abundant. On the same day, in some parts of the Eifel, a great wheel was made of straw and dragged by three horses to the top of a hill. Thither the village boys marched at nightfall, set fire to the wheel, and sent it rolling down the slope. Two lads followed it with levers to set it in motion again, in case it should anywhere meet with a check. At Oberstattfeld the wheel had to be provided by the young man who was last married.¹ About Echternach the same ceremony is called "burning the witch"; while it is going on, the older men ascend the heights and observe what wind is blowing, for that is the wind which will prevail the whole year.² At Voralberg in the Tyrol, on the first Sunday in Lent, a slender young fir-tree is surrounded with a pile of straw and firewood. To the top of the tree is fastened a human figure called the "witch," made of old clothes and stuffed with gunpowder. At night the whole is set on fire and boys and girls dance round it, swinging torches and singing rhymes in which the words "corn in the winnowing-basket, the plough in the earth" may be distinguished.³ In Swabia on the first Sunday in Lent a figure called the "witch" or the "old wife" or "winter's grandmother" is made up of

Normand, ii. 131 sq. For more evidence of customs of this sort observed in various parts of France on the first Sunday in Lent, see Madame Clément, *Histoire des Fêtes civiles et religieuses, etc., du Département du Nord*² (Cambrai, 1836), p. 351 sqq.

¹ Schmitz, *Sitten und Sagen, etc., des*

Eijler Volkes, i. 21-25; N. Hocker, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853), p. 90; *B.K.* p. 501.

² N. Hocker, *op. cit.* p. 89 sq.; *B.K.* p. 501.

³ Vonbun, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, p. 20; *B.K.* p. 501.

clothes and fastened to a pole. This is stuck in the middle of a pile of wood, to which fire is applied. While the "witch" is burning, the young people throw blazing discs into the air. The discs are thin round pieces of wood, a few inches in diameter, with notched edges to imitate the rays of the sun or stars. They have a hole in the middle, by which they are attached to the end of a wand. Before the disc is thrown it is set on fire, the wand is swung to and fro, and the impetus thus communicated to the disc is augmented by dashing the rod sharply against a sloping board. The burning disc is thus thrown off, and mounting high into the air, describes a long curve before it reaches the ground. A single lad may fling up forty or fifty of these discs, one after the other. The object is to throw them as high as possible. The wand by which they are hurled must, at least in some parts of Swabia, be of hazel. Sometimes the lads also leap over the fire brandishing lighted torches of pine-wood. The charred embers of the burned "witch" and discs are taken home and planted in the flax-fields the same night, in the belief that they will keep vermin from the fields.¹ At Wangen, near Molsheim in Baden, a like custom is observed on the first Sunday in Lent. The young people kindle a bonfire on the crest of the mountain above the village; and the burning discs which they hurl into the air are said to present in the darkness the aspect of a continual shower of falling stars. When the supply of discs is exhausted and the bonfire begins to burn low, the boys light torches and run with them at full speed down one or other of the three steep and winding paths that descend the mountain-side to the village. Bumps, bruises, and scratches are often the result of their efforts to outstrip each other in the headlong race.² In the Rhön Mountains, Bavaria, on the first Sunday in Lent, the people

¹ E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 380 sq.; Birlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, ii. 59 sq., 66 sq.; *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, ii. 2, p. 838 sq.; Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. 211, § 232; *B.K.* p. 501 sq. One of the popular German names for the first Sunday in

Lent is White Sunday, which is not to be confused with the first Sunday after Easter, which also goes by the name of White Sunday (E. Meier, *op. cit.* p. 380; Birlinger, *op. cit.* li. 58).

² H. Gaidoz, "Le dieu gaulois du soleil et le symbolisme de la roue," *Revue Archéologique*, iii. série, iv. (1884), p. 139 sq.

used to march to the top of a hill or eminence. Children and lads carried torches, brooms daubed with tar, and poles swathed in straw. A wheel, wrapt in combustibles, was kindled and rolled down the hill; and the young people rushed about the fields with their burning torches and brooms, till at last they flung them in a heap, and standing round them, struck up a hymn or a popular song. The object of running about the fields with the blazing torches was to "drive away the wicked sower." Or it was done in honour of the Virgin, that she might preserve the fruits of the earth throughout the year and bless them.¹ In neighbouring villages of Hesse, between the Rhön and the Vögel Mountains, it is thought that wherever the burning wheels roll, the fields will be safe from hail and storm.²

It seems hardly possible to separate from these bonfires, kindled on the first Sunday in Lent, the fires in which, about the same season, the effigy called Death is burned as part of the ceremony of "carrying out Death." We have seen that at Spachendorf, in Austrian Silesia, on the morning of Rupert's Day (Shrove Tuesday?), a straw-man, dressed in a fur coat and a fur cap, is laid in a hole outside the village and there burned, and that while it is blazing every one seeks to snatch a fragment of it, which he fastens to a branch of the highest tree in his garden or buries in his field, believing that this will make the crops to grow better. The ceremony is known as the "burying of Death."³ Even when the straw-man is not designated as Death, the meaning of the observance is probably the same; for the name Death, as I have tried to show, does not express the original intention of the ceremony. At Cobern in the Eifel Mountains the lads make up a straw-man on Shrove Tuesday. The effigy is formally tried and accused of having perpetrated all the thefts that have been committed in the neighbourhood throughout the year. Being condemned to death, the straw-man is led through the village, shot, and burned upon a pyre. They dance round the blazing pile, and the

¹ Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen*, p. 189; Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 207; *B.K.* p. 500 sq.

² W. Kollie, *Hessische Volks-Sitten*

und Gebräuche, p. 36.

³ Th. Vernalcken, *Mythen und Bräuche des Volkes in Oesterreich*, p. 293 sq.; *B.K.* p. 498. See above, vol. ii. p. 95.

fast bride must leap over it.¹ In Oldenburg on the evening of Shrove Tuesday people used to make long bundles of straw, which they set on fire, and then ran about the fields waving them, shrieking, and singing wild songs. Finally they burned a straw-man on the field.² In the district of Düsseldorf the straw-man burned on Shrove Tuesday was made of an unthreshed sheaf of corn.³ On the first Monday after the spring equinox the urchins of Zurich drag a straw-man on a little cart through the streets, while at the same time the girls carry about a May-tree. When vespers ring, the straw-man is burned.⁴ In the district of Aachen on Ash-Wednesday a man used to be encased in peas-straw and taken to an appointed place. Here he slipped quietly out of his straw casing, which was then burned, the children thinking that it was the man who was being burned.⁵ In the Val di Ledro (Tyrol) on the last day of the Carnival a figure is made up of straw and brushwood and then burned. The figure is called the Old Woman, and the ceremony "burning the Old Woman."⁶

Another occasion on which these fire-festivals are held is Easter Eve, the Saturday before Easter Sunday. On that day it has been customary in Catholic countries to extinguish all the lights in the churches, and then to make a new fire, sometimes with flint and steel, sometimes with a burning-glass. At this fire is lit the great Paschal or Easter candle, which is then used to rekindle all the extinguished lights in the church. In many parts of Germany a bonfire is also kindled, by means of the new fire, on some open space near the church. It is consecrated, and the people bring sticks of oak, walnut, and beech, which they char in the fire, and then take home with them. Some of these charred sticks are thereupon burned at home in a newly-kindled fire, with a prayer that God will preserve the homestead from fire, lightning, and hail. Thus every house receives "new fire." Some of the sticks are kept throughout the year and laid on the hearth-fire during heavy thunder-storms to prevent the

¹ Schmitz, *Sitten u. Sagen des Eifler Volkes*, i. 20; *B.K.* p. 499.

² Straeckerjan, *Aberglaube u. Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, ii. 39, § 306; *B.K.* 498.

³ *B.K.* p. 499.

⁴ *B.K.* p. 498 sq.

⁵ *B.K.* p. 499.

⁶ Schneller, *Märchen u. Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, p. 234 sq.; *B.K.* p. 499 sq.

house from being struck by lightning, or they are inserted in the roof with the like intention. Others are placed in the fields, gardens, and meadows, with a prayer that God will keep them from blight and hail. Such fields and gardens are thought to thrive more than others; the corn and the plants that grow in them are not beaten down by hail, nor devoured by mice, vermin, and beetles; no witch harms them, and the ears of corn stand close and full. The charred sticks are also applied to the plough. The ashes of the Easter bonfire, together with the ashes of the consecrated palm-branches, are mixed with the seed at sowing. A wooden figure called Judas is sometimes burned in the consecrated bonfire, and even where this custom has been abolished the bonfire itself in some places goes by the name of "the burning of Judas."¹ Some of these customs have been transported by the Catholic Church to the New World. Thus in Mexico the new fire is struck from a flint early in the morning of Holy Saturday, and a candle which has been lighted at the sacred flame is carried through the church by a deacon shouting "*Lumen Christi*." Later in the day effigies of Judas, made of paper pulp, are everywhere burned or exploded, to the delight of the rabble. They are of all shapes and sizes, and in the larger towns they dangle by scores or hundreds from cords stretched across the streets. Some of them are stuffed with meat, bread, soap, clothing, and candy, for which the crowd scramble and scuffle while

¹ *B. K.* pp. 502-505; Leoprechting, *Aus dem Lechrain*, p. 172 sq.; Bie-linger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, i. 472 sq.; Montanus, *Die deutsche Volksfeste*, p. 26; Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 241 sq., 533 sq.; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, i. 391 sq.; Wutke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² p. 68 sq., § 81; Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,³ p. 149, §§ 1286-1289; *Bavaria, Land- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, i. 371; W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche*, p. 44 sq.; *County Folk-lore, Leicestershire and Rutland*, collected by C. J. Billson, p. 75 sq.; A. Tiraboschi, "Usi pasquali nel Bergamasco," *Archiv-*

via per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari, i. (1892), p. 442 sq. The ecclesiastical custom of lighting the Paschal or Easter candle is very fully described by Mr. H. J. Feasey, *Ancient English Holy Week Ceremonial* (London, 1897), p. 179 sqq. These candles were sometimes of prodigious size; in the cathedrals of Norwich and Durham, for example, they reached almost to the roof, from which they had to be lighted. Often they went by the name of the Judas Light or the Judas Candle; and sometimes small waxen figures of Judas were hung on them. See Feasey, *op. cit.* pp. 193, 213 sqq. As to the ritual of the new fire at St. Peter's in Rome, see Chambers, *Book of Days*, i. 421.

the effigies are burning.¹ Similarly in Brazil the mourning for the death of Christ ceases at noon on Easter Saturday and gives place to an extravagant burst of joy at his resurrection. Shots are fired everywhere, and effigies of Judas are hung on trees or dragged about the streets, to be finally burned or otherwise destroyed.²

But usages of this sort are not confined to the Latin Church; they are common to the Greek Church also. Every year on the Saturday before Easter Sunday a new fire is miraculously kindled at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It descends from heaven and ignites the candles which the patriarch holds in his hands, while with closed eyes he wrestles in prayer all alone in the chapel of the Angel. The worshippers meanwhile wait anxiously in the body of the church, and great are their transports of joy when at one of the windows of the chapel, which had been all dark a minute before, there suddenly appears the hand of an angel, or of the patriarch, holding a lighted taper. This is the sacred new fire; it is passed out to the expectant believers, and the desperate struggle which ensues among them to get a share of its blessed influence is only terminated by the intervention of the Turkish soldiery, who restore peace and order by hustling the whole multitude impartially out of the church.³ At Athens the new fire is kindled in the cathedral at midnight on Holy Saturday. A dense crowd with unlit candles in their hands fills the square in front of the cathedral; the king, the archbishop, and the highest dignitaries of the church, arrayed in their gorgeous robes, occupy a platform; and at the presumed moment of the resurrection the bells ring out, and the whole square bursts as by magic into a blaze of light. Theoretically all the candles are lit from the sacred new fire in the cathedral, but practically it may be suspected that the matches which bear the name of Lucifer have some share in the sudden illumination.⁴ Effigies of Judas used to be burned at Athens

¹ F. Starr, "Holy Week in Mexico," *Journal of American Folk-lore*, xii. (1899), p. 164 sq.

² K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 458 sq.; E. Montet, "Religion et

Superstition dans l'Amérique du Sud," *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, xxxii. (1895), p. 145.

³ E. Coriet, *Essai sur les fêtes religieuses*, pp. 137-139.

⁴ I have described the ceremony as

on Easter Saturday, but the custom has been forbidden by the Government. However, firing goes on more or less continuously all over the city both on Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday, and the cartridges used on this occasion are not always blank. The shots are aimed at Judas, but sometimes they miss him and hit other people. Outside of Athens the practice of burning Judas in effigy still survives in some places. For example, in Cos a straw image of the traitor is made on Easter Day, and after being hung up and shot at it is burned.¹ A similar custom appears to prevail at Thebes.² In the Armenian Church the sacred new fire is kindled not at Easter but at Candlemas, that is, on the second of February, or on the eve of that festival. The materials of the bonfire are piled in an open space near a church, and they are generally ignited by young couples who have been married within the year. However, it is the bishop or his vicar who lights the candles with which the young married pairs set fire to the pile. When the ceremony is over the people eagerly pick up charred sticks or ashes of the bonfire and preserve them at home with a sort of superstitious veneration.³

In spite of the thin cloak of Christianity thrown over these customs by representing the new fire as an emblem of Christ and the figure burned in it as an effigy of Judas, we can hardly doubt that both practices are of pagan origin. Neither of them has the authority of Christ or of his disciples; but both of them have abundant analogies in popular custom and superstition. Some instances of the practice of annually extinguishing fires and relighting them from a new and sacred

I witnessed it at Athens, on April 13th, 1890. Compare *Folk-lore*, i. (1890), p. 275. Having been honoured, like other strangers, with a place on the platform, I did not myself detect Lucifer at work among the multitude below; I merely suspected his presence.

¹ W. H. D. Rouse, "Folklore from the southern Sporades," *Folk-lore*, x. (1899), p. 178.

² Mrs. E. A. Gardner was so kind as to send me a photograph of a Theban Judas dangling from a gallows and partially enveloped in smoke.

The photograph was taken at Thebes during the Easter celebration of 1891.

³ Ciribied, "Mémoire sur le gouvernement et sur la religion des anciens Arméniens," *Mémoires publiées par la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France*, ii. (1820), pp. 285-287. The writer tells us that the ceremony is merely a continuation of an old heathen festival which was held at the beginning of spring in honour of the fire-god Mihr. A bonfire was made in a public place, and lamps kindled as it were kept burning throughout the year in each of the fire-god's temples.

flame have already come before us ;¹ but a few more examples may here be cited for the sake of illustrating the wide diffusion of a custom which has found its way into the ritual both of the Eastern and of the Western Church.

The Incas of Peru celebrated a festival called Raymi, a word which their native historian Garcilasso de la Vega tells us was equivalent to our Easter. It was held in honour of the sun at the solstice in June. For three days before the festival the people fasted, men did not sleep with their wives, and no fires were lighted in Cuzco, the capital. The sacred new fire was obtained direct from the sun by concentrating his beams on a highly polished concave plate and reflecting them on a little cotton wool. With this holy fire the sheep and lambs offered to the sun were consumed, and the flesh of such as were to be eaten at the festival was roasted. Portions of the new fire were also conveyed to the temple of the sun and to the convent of the sacred virgins, where they were kept burning all the year, and it was an ill omen if the holy flame went out. When the sun happened to be hidden by clouds at the time of the festival, as might often happen in the rainy climate of Cuzco, the new fire was obtained by the friction of two sticks ; but the people looked on it as an evil augury if the fire had to be kindled in this manner, for they said that the sun must be angry with them since he refused to light the flame with his own hand.² At a festival held in the last month of the old Mexican year all the fires both in the temples and in the houses were extinguished, and the priest kindled a new fire by rubbing two sticks against each other before the image of the fire-god.³ Once a year the Iroquois priesthood supplied the people with a new fire. As a preparation for the annual rite the fires in all the huts were extinguished and the ashes scattered about. Then the priest, wearing the insignia of his office, went from hut to hut re-lighting the fires by means of a flint.⁴ Among the Esquimaux

¹ See above, vol. ii. pp. 329 *sqq.*, 469.

² Garcilasso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, Markham's translation, vol. ii. pp. 155-163.

³ Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle Espagne*, bk. ii.

ch. 18 and 37. pp. 76, 161 (French translation by Jourdanet and Simeon) ; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale*, iii. 136.

⁴ Schoolcraft, *Notes on the Iroquois*, p. 137.

with whom C. F. Hall resided, it was the custom that at a certain time, which answered to our New Year's Day, two men went about from house to house blowing out every light in the village. One of the men was dressed to represent a woman. Afterwards the lights were rekindled from a fresh fire. An Esquimaux woman being asked what all this meant, replied, "New sun—new light."¹

In the Soudanese kingdom of Wadai all the fires in the villages are put out and the ashes removed from the houses on the day which precedes the New Year festival. At the beginning of the new year a new fire is lit by the friction of wood in the great straw hut where the village elders lounge away the sultry hours together; and every man takes from thence a burning brand with which he rekindles the fire on his domestic hearth.² Among the Swahilis of East Africa the greatest festival is that of the New Year, which falls in the second half of August. At a given moment all the fires are extinguished with water and afterwards relit by the friction of two dry pieces of wood. Formerly no awkward questions were asked about any crimes committed on this occasion, so some people improved the shining hour by knocking a few poor devils on the head. Shooting still goes on during the whole day, and at night the proceedings generally wind up with a great dance.³ The King of Benamatapa in East Africa used to send commissioners annually to every town in his dominions; on the arrival of one of these officers the inhabitants of each town had to put out all their fires and to receive a new fire from him. Failure to comply with this custom was treated as rebellion.⁴ Some tribes of British Central Africa carefully extinguish the fires on the hearths at the beginning of the hoeing season and at harvest; the fires are afterwards rekindled by friction, and the people indulge in dances of various kinds.⁵

¹ C. F. Hall, *Life with the Esquimaux*, ii. 323.

² G. Nachtigal, *Sahara und Sudan*, iii. 251 (Leipsic, 1889).

³ Jerome Becker, *La vie en Afrique* (Paris and Brussels, 1887), ii. 36; O. Baumann, *Usaibara und seine Nachbargebiete* (Berlin, 1891), p. 55 sq.

⁴ Barbosa, *Description of the coasts*

of East Africa and Malabar (Hakluyt Society, 1866), p. 8. It is to this custom doubtless that Montaigne refers in his essays (i. 22, vol. i. p. 140, of Charpentier's edition), though he mentions no names.

⁵ Sir H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (London, 1897), pp. 426, 439.

When the Nagas of Northern India have felled the timber and cut down the scrub in those patches of jungle which they propose to cultivate, they put out all the fires in the village and light a new fire by rubbing two dry pieces of wood together. Then having kindled torches at it they proceed with them to the jungle and ignite the felled timber and brushwood. The flesh of a cow or buffalo is also roasted on the new fire and furnishes a sacrificial meal.¹ Near the small town of Kahma in Burma, between Prome and Thayetmyo, certain gases escape from a hollow in the ground and burn with a steady flame during the dry season of the year. The people regard the flame as the forge of a spectral smith who here carried on his business after death had removed him from his old smithy in the village. Once a year all the household fires in Kahma are extinguished and then lighted afresh from the ghostly flame.² In China every year, about the beginning of April, certain officials, called *Ss'hiuen*, used of old to go about the country armed with wooden clappers. Their business was to summon the people and command them to put out every fire. This was the beginning of a season called *Han-shih-tsieh*, or "eating cold food." For three days all household fires remained extinct as a preparation for the solemn renewal of the fire, which took place on the fifth or sixth day of April, being the hundred and fifth day after the winter solstice. The ceremony was performed with great pomp by the same officials, who procured the new fire from heaven by reflecting the sun's rays either from a metal mirror or from a crystal on dry moss. Fire thus obtained is called by the Chinese heavenly fire, and its use is enjoined in sacrifices; whereas fire elicited by the friction of wood is termed by them earthly fire, and its use is prescribed for cooking and other domestic purposes. When once the new fire had thus been drawn down from the sun, all the people were free to rekindle their domestic hearths; and, as a Chinese distich has it—

¹ Lieut. R. Stewart, "Notes on Northern Cachar," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, xxiv. (1855), p. 612.

² A. Baslian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 49 sq.; Shway Yoe, *The Burman*, ii. 325 sq.

"At the festival of the cold food there are a thousand white stalks among the flowers ;

On the day Tsing-ming, at sunrise, you may see the smoke of ten thousand houses."

According to a Chinese philosopher, the reason for thus renewing fire periodically is that the vital principle grows weaker and weaker in old fire, whereas in new fire it is young and vigorous. This annual renewal of fire was a ceremony of very great antiquity in China, since it is known to have been observed in the time of the first dynasty, about two thousand years before Christ. Under the Tcheou dynasty a change in the calendar led to shifting the fire-festival from spring to the summer solstice, but afterwards it was brought back to its original date. Although the custom appears to have long fallen into disuse, the barbarous inhabitants of Hainan, an island to the south of China, still call a year "a fire," as if in memory of the time when the years were reckoned by the annually recurring ceremony of rekindling the sacred fire.¹ In classical antiquity the Greek island of Lemnos was devoted to the worship of the smith-god Hephaestus, who was said to have fallen on it when Zeus hurled him from heaven.² Once a year every fire in the island was extinguished and remained extinct for nine days, during which sacrifices were offered to the dead and to the infernal powers. New fire was brought in a ship from the sacred isle of Delos, and with it the fires in the houses and the workshops were relit. The people said that with the new fire they made a new beginning of life. If the ship that bore the sacred flame arrived too soon, it might not put in to shore, but had to cruise in the offing till the nine days were expired.³ At Rome the sacred fire in the temple of Vesta was kindled anew every year on the first of March, which used to be the beginning of the Roman year ;⁴ the task of lighting it was entrusted to the Vestal Virgins, and they performed it by drilling a hole in a board of 'lucky

¹ G. Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise* (The Hague and Leyden, 1875), pp. 139-143 ; C. Pitini, "Il fuoco nella tradizione degli antichi Cinesi," *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana*, i. (1887), pp. 20-23.

² Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 82 ; Homer, *Iliad*, i. 590 sqq.

³ Philostratus, *Heroica*, xx. 24.

⁴ Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 143 sq. ; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 6.

wood till the flame was elicited by friction. The new fire thus produced was carried into the temple of Vesta by one of the virgins in a bronze sieve.¹ Among the Celts of Ireland a new fire was kindled at a place called Tlachtga on the eve of the first of November, which was the beginning of the Irish new year, and from this fresh fire all the hearths in Ireland are said to have been rekindled.² In the villages near Moscow at the present time the peasants put out all their fires on the eve of the first of September, and next morning at sunrise a wise man or a wise woman rekindles them with the help of muttered incantations and spells.³

Instances of such practices might doubtless be multiplied, but the foregoing examples may suffice to render it probable that the ecclesiastical ceremony of lighting a sacred new fire on Easter Saturday had originally nothing to do with Christianity, but is merely one case of a world-wide custom which the Church has seen fit to incorporate in its ritual. It might be supposed that in the Western Church the custom was merely a survival of the old Roman usage of renewing the fire on the first of March, were it not that the observance by the Eastern Church of the custom on the same day seems to point back to a still older period when the ceremony of lighting a new fire in spring, perhaps at the vernal equinox, was common to many peoples of the Mediterranean area. We may conjecture that wherever such a ceremony has been observed, it originally marked the beginning of a new year, as it did in ancient Rome and Ireland, and as it still does in the Soudanese kingdom of Wadai and among the Swahilis of Eastern Africa.

¹ Festus, ed. Müller, p. 106, s.v. "Ignis." Plutarch describes a method of rekindling the sacred fire by means of the sun's rays reflected from a hollow mirror (*Yuma*, 9); but he seems to be referring to a Greek rather than to the Roman custom. The rule of celibacy imposed on the Vestals, whose duty it was to re-light the sacred fire as well as to preserve it when it was once made, is perhaps explained by a superstition current among French peasants that if a girl can blow up a smouldering candle into a flame she is a virgin, but that if she fails to do so, she is not.

See Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 27; B. Souché, *Croyances, Prises, et Traditions diverses*, p. 12. At least it seems more likely that the rule sprang from a superstition of this sort than from a simple calculation of expediency, as I formerly suggested (*Journal of Philology*, xiv. (1885), p. 158).

² J. Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom*, p. 514 sq. Tlachtga has been identified with an ancient *rath* or fort on the Hill of Ward near Athboy in Meath.

³ W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian people*, p. 254 sq.

The essentially pagan character of the Easter fire festival appears plainly both from the mode in which it is celebrated by the peasants and from the superstitious beliefs which they associate with it. All over Northern and Central Germany, from Altmark and Anhalt on the east, through Brunswick, Hanover, Oldenburg, the Harz district, and Hesse to Westphalia the Easter bonfires still blaze simultaneously on the hill-tops. As many as forty may sometimes be counted within sight at once. Long before Easter the young people have been busy collecting firewood; every farmer contributes, and tar-barrels, petroleum cases, and so forth go to swell the pile. Neighbouring villages vie with each other as to which shall send up the greatest blaze. The fires are always kindled, year after year, on the same hill, which accordingly often takes the name of Easter Mountain. It is a fine spectacle to watch from some eminence the bonfires flaring up one after another on the neighbouring heights. As far as their light reaches, so far, in the belief of the peasants, the fields will be fruitful, and the houses on which they shine will be safe from conflagration or sickness. At Volkmarsen, in Hesse, the people used to observe which way the wind blew the flames, and then they sowed flax seed in that direction, confident that it would grow well. Brands taken from the bonfires preserve houses from being struck by lightning; and the ashes increase the fertility of the fields, protect them from mice, and mixed with the drinking-water of cattle make the animals thrive and ensures them against plague. As the flames die down, young and old leap over them, and cattle are sometimes driven through the smouldering embers. In some places tar-barrels or wheels wrapt in straw used to be set on fire, and then sent rolling down the hillside. In others the boys light torches and wisps of straw at the bonfires and rush about brandishing them in their hands. Where the people are divided between Protestantism and Catholicism, as in Hildesheim, it has been observed that among Protestants the Easter bonfires are generally left to the boys, while in Catholic districts they are cared for by grown-up persons, and here the whole population will gather round the blazing pile and join in singing

choral hymns, which echo far and wide in the stillness of night.¹

In Münsterland, these Easter fires are always kindled upon certain definite hills, which are hence known as Easter or Paschal Mountains. The whole community assembles about the fire. Fathers of families form an inner circle round it. An outer circle is composed of the young men and maidens, who, singing Easter hymns, march round and round the fire in the direction of the sun, till the blaze dies down. Then the girls jump over the fire in a line, one after the other, each supported by two young men who hold her hands and run beside her. When the fire has burned out, the whole assembly marches in solemn procession to the church, singing hymns. They go thrice round the church, and then break up. In the twilight boys with blazing bundles of straw run over the fields to make them fruitful.² At Delmenhorst, in Oldenburg, it used to be the custom to cut down two trees, plant them in the ground side by side, and pile twelve tar-barrels, one above the other, against each of the trees. Brushwood was then heaped about the trees, and on the evening of Easter Saturday the boys, after rushing about with blazing bean-poles in their hands, set fire to the whole. At the end of the ceremony the urchins tried to blacken each other and the clothes of grown-up people.³ In Schaumburg, the Easter bonfires may be seen blazing on all the mountains around for miles. They are made with a tar-barrel fastened to a pine-tree, which is wrapt in straw. The people dance singing round them.⁴

¹ Kuhn und Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 373; A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen*, ii. 134 sqq.; *id.*, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 312 sq.; Temme, *Volkssagen der Altmark*, p. 75 sq.; K. Lynker, *Deutsche Sagen und Sitten in hessischen Gauen*, p. 240; H. Pröhle, *Harz-bilder*, p. 63; R. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde* (Brunswick, 1896), pp. 240-242; W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche* (Marburg, 1888), pp. 44-47; F. A. Reimann, *Deutsche Volksfeste* (Weimar, 1839), p. 37; *Sitten und Gebräuche in Duder-*

stadt, "Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde", ii. (1855), p. 107; K. Seifart, *Sagen, Märchen, Schwänke und Gebräuche aus Stadt und Stift Hildesheim*² (Hildesheim, 1889), pp. 177, 180; O. Hartung, "Zur Volkskunde aus Anhalt," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897), p. 76.

² Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, ii. 43 sq., § 313; *B.A.* p. 505 sq.

³ Strackerjan, *op. cit.* ii. 43, § 313.

⁴ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ i. 512; *B.A.* p. 506 sq.

In the Harz Mountains the fire is commonly made by piling brushwood about a tree and setting it on fire. At Osterode, every one tries to snatch a brand from the bonfire and runs about with it; the better it burns, the more lucky it is. In Grund there are torch-races.¹ In the Altmark the Easter bonfires are composed of tar-barrels, bee-hives, and so forth piled round a pole. The young folk dance round the fire; and when it has died out, the old folk come and collect the ashes, which they preserve as a remedy for the ailments of bees. It is also believed that as far as the blaze of the bonfire is visible, the corn will grow well throughout the year, and no conflagration will break out.² At Braunröde, in the Harz Mountains, it was the custom to burn squirrels in the Easter bonfire.³ In the Altmark, bones were burned in it.⁴

Further south the Easter fires are, or used to be, lit in many districts of Bavaria. Thus on Easter Monday in some parts of Middle Franken the schoolboys collect all the old worn-out besoms they can lay hands on, and march with them in a long procession to a neighbouring height. When the first chime of the evening bell comes up from the dale they set fire to the brooms, and run along the ridges waving them, so that seen from below the hills appear to be crested with a twinkling and moving chain of fire.⁵ In some parts of Upper Bavaria at Easter burning arrows or discs of wood were shot from hill-tops high into the air, as in the Swabian custom already described. At Oberau, instead of the discs, an old cart-wheel was sometimes wrapt in straw, ignited, and sent rolling and blazing down the mountain. The lads who hurled the discs received painted Easter eggs from the girls.⁶ Near Forchheim, in Upper Franken, a straw-man called the Judas used to be burned in the churchyards on

¹ H. Pröhle, *Harzbilder*, p. 63; *id.*, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853), p. 79; Kuhn und Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 373; *B.K.* p. 507.

² Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 312 sq.; *B.K.* p. 507.

³ *B.K.* p. 508. Compare J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutsch. Myth.* i. 74;

Grimm, *Deutsche Myth.* i. 512. The two latter writers only state that before the fires were kindled it was customary to hunt squirrels in the woods.

⁴ Kuhn, *l.c.*; *B.K.* p. 508.

⁵ *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iii. 956.

⁶ Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. 211 sq., § 233; *B.K.* p. 507 sq.

Easter Saturday. The whole village contributed wood to the pyre on which he perished, and the charred sticks were afterwards kept and planted in the fields on Walpurgis Day (the first of May) to preserve the wheat from blight and mildew.¹ About a hundred years ago the custom at Althenneberg, in Upper Bavaria, used to be as follows. On the afternoon of Easter Saturday the lads collected wood, which they piled in a cornfield, while in the middle of the pile they set up a tall wooden cross all swathed in straw. After the evening service they lighted their lanterns at the consecrated candle in the church, and ran with them at full speed to the pyre, each striving to get there first. The first to arrive set fire to the heap. No woman or girl might come near the bonfire, but they were allowed to watch it from a distance. As the flames rose the men and lads rejoiced and made merry, shouting, "We are burning the Judas!" Two of them had to watch the glowing embers the whole night long, lest people should come and steal them. Next morning at sunrise they carefully collected the ashes, and threw them into the running water of the Röten brook. The man who had been the first to reach the pyre and to kindle it was rewarded on Easter Sunday by the women, who gave him coloured eggs at the church door. Well-to-do women gave him two; poorer women gave him only one. The object of the whole ceremony was to keep off the hail. About a century ago the Judas fire, as it was called, was put down by the police.² At Giggerhausen and Aufkirchen, two other villages of Upper Bavaria, a similar custom prevailed, yet with some interesting differences. Here the ceremony, which took place between nine and ten at night on Easter Saturday, was called "burning the Easter Man." On a height about a mile from the village the young fellows set up a tall cross enveloped in straw, so that it looked like a man with his arms stretched out. This was the Easter Man. No lad under eighteen years of age might take part in the ceremony. One of them stationed himself beside the Easter Man, holding in his hand a consecrated taper which he had brought from the church and

¹ Bavaria, *Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iii. 357.

² Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. p. 212 sq., § 236.

lighted. The rest stood at equal intervals in a great circle round the cross. At a given signal they raced thrice round the circle, and then at a second signal ran straight at the cross and at the lad with the lighted taper beside it; the one who reached the goal first had the right of setting fire to the Easter Man. Great was the jubilation while he was burning. When he had been consumed in the flames, three lads were chosen from among the rest, and each of the three drew a circle on the ground with a stick thrice round the ashes. Then they all left the spot. On Easter Monday the villagers gathered the ashes and strewed them on their fields; also they planted in the fields palm-branches which had been consecrated on Palm Sunday, and sticks which had been charred and hallowed on Good Friday, all for the purpose of protecting their fields against showers of hail. The custom of burning an Easter Man made of straw on Easter Saturday was observed also at Abensberg, in Lower Bavaria.¹ In some parts of Swabia the Easter fires might not be kindled with iron or steel or flint, but only by the friction of wood.²

Thus the custom of the Easter fires appears to have prevailed all over Central Germany from north to south. We find it also in Holland, where the fires were kindled on the highest eminences, and the people danced round them and leaped through the flames or over the glowing embers. Here too, as so often in Germany, the materials for the bonfire were collected by the young folk from door to door.³ In many parts of Sweden firearms are, as at Athens, discharged in all directions on Easter eve, and huge bonfires are lighted on hills and eminences. Some people think that the intention is to keep off the Troll and other evil spirits who are especially active at this season.⁴ When the afternoon service on Good Friday is over, German children in Bohemia drive Judas out of the church by running about the sacred edifice and even the streets shaking rattles and

¹ Panzer, *op. cit.* ii. p. 73 sq., §§ 114, 115. The customs observed at these places and at Althenneberg are described together by Mannhardt, *B.K.* p. 505.

² Birlinger, *Volksthümlicher aus*

Schwaben, ii. p. 82, § 106; *B.K.* p. 508.

³ J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. 75 sq.; *B.K.* p. 506.

⁴ L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 228.

clappers. Next day, on Easter Saturday, the remains of the holy oil are burnt before the church door in a fire which must be kindled with flint and steel. This fire is called "the burning of Judas," but in spite of its evil name a beneficent virtue is ascribed to it, for the people scuffle for the cinders, which they put in the roofs of their houses as a safeguard against fire and lightning.¹

In the central Highlands of Scotland bonfires, known as the Beltane fires, were formerly kindled with great ceremony on the first of May, and the traces of human sacrifices at them were particularly clear and unequivocal. The custom of lighting the bonfires lasted in various places far into the eighteenth century, and the descriptions of the ceremony by writers of that period present such a curious and interesting picture of primitive heathendom surviving in our own country that I will reproduce them in the words of their authors. The fullest of the descriptions, so far as I know, is the one bequeathed to us by John Ramsay, laird of Ochtertyre, near Stirling, the patron of Burns and the friend of Sir Walter Scott. From his voluminous manuscripts, written in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a selection has been published in recent years. The following account of Beltane is extracted from a chapter dealing with Highland superstitions. Ramsay says: "But the most considerable of the Druidical festivals is that of Beltane, or May-day, which was lately observed in some parts of the Highlands with extraordinary ceremonies. Of later years it is chiefly attended to by young people, persons advanced in years considering it as inconsistent with their gravity to give it any countenance. Yet a number of circumstances relative to it may be collected from tradition, or the conversation of very old people, who witnessed this feast in their youth, when the ancient rites were better observed.

"This festive is called in Gaelic *Beal-tene*—i.e. the fire

¹ W. Müller, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren*, pp. 321, 397 sq. In Wagstadt, a town of Austrian Silesia, a boy in a red waistcoat used to play the part of Judas on the Wednesday before Good Friday. He was chased from before the church door by the other school children, who

pursued him through the streets with shouts and the noise of rattles and clappers till they reached a certain suburb, where they always caught him and beat because he had betrayed the Redeemer. See A. Peter, *Volksthümliches aus österreichisch Schlesien*, ii. 282 sq.

of Bel. . . . Like the other public worship of the Druids, the Beltane feast seems to have been performed on hills or eminences. They thought it degrading to him whose temple is the universe to suppose that he would dwell in any house made with hands. Their sacrifices were therefore offered in the open air, frequently upon the tops of hills, where they were presented with the grandest views of nature, and were nearest the seat of warmth and order. And, according to tradition, such was the manner of celebrating this festival in the Highlands within the last hundred years. But since the decline of superstition, it has been celebrated by the people of each hamlet on some hill or rising ground around which their cattle were pasturing. Thither the young folks repaired in the morning and cut a trench, on the summit of which a seat of turf was formed for the company. And in the middle a pile of wood or other fuel was placed, which of old they kindled with *tein-eigin*—i.e. forced fire or *need fire*. Although, for many years past, they have been contented with common fire, yet we shall now describe the process, because it will hereafter appear that recourse is still had to the *tein-eigin* upon extraordinary emergencies.

"The night before, all the fires in the country were carefully extinguished, and next morning the materials for exciting this sacred fire were prepared. The most primitive method seems to be that which was used in the islands of Skye, Mull, and Tiree. A well-seasoned plank of oak was procured, in the midst of which a hole was bored. A wimble of the same timber was then applied, the end of which they fitted to the hole. But in some parts of the mainland the machinery was different. They used a frame of green wood, of a square form, in the centre of which was an axle-tree. In some places three times three persons, in others three times nine, were required for turning round by turns the axle-tree or wimble. If any of them had been guilty of murder, adultery, theft, or other atrocious crime, it was imagined either that the fire would not kindle, or that it would be devoid of its usual virtue. So soon as any sparks were emitted by means of the violent friction, they applied a species of agaric which grows on old birch-trees, and is very combustible. This fire had the appearance of

being immediately derived from heaven, and manifold were the virtues ascribed to it. They esteemed it a preservative against witchcraft, and a sovereign remedy against malignant diseases, both in the human species and in cattle; and by it the strongest poisons were supposed to have their nature changed.

"After kindling the bonfire with the *tein-eigin* the company prepared their victuals. And as soon as they had finished their meal they amused themselves a while in singing and dancing round the fire. Towards the close of the entertainment, the person who officiated as master of the feast produced a large cake baked with eggs and scalloped round the edge, called *an bonnach beal-tine*—i.e. the Beltane cake. It was divided into a number of pieces, and distributed in great form to the company. There was one particular piece which whoever got was called *cailleach bealtine*—i.e. the Beltane *carline*, a term of great reproach. Upon his being known, part of the company laid hold of him and made a show of putting him into the fire; but the majority interposing, he was rescued. And in some places they laid him flat on the ground, making as if they would quarter him. Afterwards, he was pelted with egg-shells, and retained the odious appellation during the whole year. And while the feast was fresh in people's memory, they affected to speak of the *cailleach beal-tine* as dead.

"This festival was longest observed in the interior Highlands, for towards the west coast the traces of it are faintest. In Glenorchy and Lorne, a large cake is made on that day, which they consume in the house; and in Mull it has a large hole in the middle, through which each of the cows in the fold is milked. In Tiree it is of a triangular form. The more elderly people remember when this festival was celebrated without-doors with some solemnity in both islands. There are at present no vestiges of it in Skye or the Long Island, the inhabitants of which have substituted the *bonnach Micheil* or St. Michael's cake. It is made at Michaelmas with milk and oatmeal, and some eggs are sprinkled on its surface. Part of it is sent to the neighbours.

"It is probable that at the original Beltane festival there

were two fires kindled near one another. When any person is in a critical dilemma, pressed on each side by unsurmountable difficulties, the Highlanders have a proverb, *The e' eada anda theine bealtuin*—i.e. he is between the two Beltane fires. There are in several parts small round hills, which, it is like, owe their present names to such solemn uses. One of the highest and most central in Icolmkil is called *Cnoch-nan-ainneal*—i.e. the hill of the fires. There is another of the same name near the kirk of Balquhiddy; and at Killin there is a round green eminence which seems to have been raised by art. It is called *Tom-nan-ainneal*—i.e. the eminence of the fires. Around it there are the remains of a circular wall about two feet high. On the top a stone stands upon end. According to the tradition of the inhabitants, it was a place of Druidical worship; and it was afterwards pitched on as the most venerable spot for holding courts of justice for the country of Breadalbane. The earth of this eminence is still thought to be possessed of some healing virtue, for when cattle are observed to be diseased, some of it is sent for, which is rubbed on the part affected."¹ The same writer tells us that on Beltane day the people of Strathspey used to make a hoop of rowan-tree, through which they forced all the sheep and lambs to pass both evening and morning,² doubtless as a precaution against witchcraft.

In the parish of Callander, a beautiful district of western Perthshire, the Beltane custom was still in vogue towards the end of the eighteenth century. It has been described as follows by the parish minister of the time: "Upon the first day of May, which is called *Beltan*, or *Bal-tein* day, all the boys in a township or hamlet, meet in the moors. They cut a table in the green sod, of a round figure, by casting a trench in the ground, of such circumference as to hold the whole company. They kindle a fire and dress a repast of eggs and milk in the consistence of a custard. They knead a cake of oatmeal, which is toasted at the embers against a

¹ *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, from the MSS. of John Ramsay, Esq., of Ochertyre, edited by A. Allardyce (Edinburgh and London, 1888), ii. 439-445. The

etymology of the word Beltane is uncertain; the popular derivation of the first part from the Phœnician Baal is absurd.

² *Op. cit.* ii. 254.

stone. After the custard is eaten up, they divide the cake into so many portions, as similar as possible to one another in size and shape, as there are persons in the company. They daub one of these portions all over with charcoal, until it be perfectly black. . They put all the bits of cake into a bonnet. Every one, blindfold, draws out a portion. He who holds the bonnet is entitled to the last bit. Whoever draws the black bit is the *devoted* person, who is to be sacrificed to *Baal*, whose favour they mean to implore, in rendering the year productive of the sustenance of man and beast. There is little doubt of these inhuman sacrifices having been once offered in this country, as well as in the east, although they now pass from the act of sacrificing, and only compel the *devoted* person to leap three times through the flames; with which the ceremonies of this festival are closed.”¹

Thomas Pennant, who travelled in Perthshire in the year 1769, tells us that “on the 1st of May, the herdsmen of every village hold their Bel-tien, a rural sacrifice. They cut a square trench on the ground, leaving the turf in the middle; on that they make a fire of wood, on which they dress a large caudle of eggs, butter, oatmeal and milk; and bring besides the ingredients of the caudle, plenty of beer and whisky; for each of the company must contribute something. The rites begin with spilling some of the caudle on the ground, by way of libation: on that every one takes a cake of oatmeal, upon which are raised nine square knobs, each dedicated to some particular being, the supposed preserver of their flocks and herds, or to some particular animal, the real destroyer of them: each person then turns his face to the fire, breaks off a knob, and flinging it over his shoulders, says, ‘This I give to thee, preserve thou my horses; this to thee, preserve thou my sheep; and so on.’ After that, they use the same ceremony to the noxious animals: ‘This I give to thee, O fox! spare thou my lambs; this to thee, O hooded crow! this to thee, O eagle!’ When the ceremony is over, they dine on the caudle; and after the feast is finished, what is left is hid by two persons deputed for that purpose; but on the next

¹ J. Robertson, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xi. 620 sq.

Sunday they re-assemble, and finish the reliques of the first entertainment."¹

Another writer of the same period has described the Beltane festival as it was held in the parish of Logierait in Perthshire. He says: "On the 1st of May, O.S., a festival called *Beltan* is annually held here. It is chiefly celebrated by the cow-herds, who assemble by scores in the fields, to dress a dinner for themselves, of boiled milk and eggs. These dishes they eat with a sort of cakes baked for the occasion, and having small lumps in the form of *nipples*, raised all over the surface."² In this last account no mention is made of bonfires, but they were probably lighted, for a contemporary writer informs us that in the parish of Kirkmichael, which adjoins the parish of Logierait on the east, the custom of lighting a fire in the fields and baking a consecrated cake on the first of May was not quite obsolete in his time.³ We may conjecture that the cake with knobs was formerly used for the purpose of determining who should be the "Beltane earline" or victim doomed to the flames. A trace of this custom survived, perhaps, in the custom of baking oatmeal cakes of a special kind and rolling them down hill about noon on the first of May; for it was thought that the person whose cake broke as it rolled would die or be unfortunate within the year. These cakes, or bannocks as we call them in Scotland, were baked in the usual way, but they were washed over with a thin batter composed of whipped egg, milk or cream, and a little oatmeal. This custom appears to have prevailed at or near Kingussie in Inverness-shire. At Achterneed, near Strathpeffer in Ross-shire, the Beltane bannocks were called *icharnican* or hand-cakes, because they were kneaded entirely in the hand, and not on a board or table like common cakes; and after being baked they might not be placed anywhere but in the hands of the children who were to eat them.⁴ In the north-east of Scotland the Beltane fires were

¹ Pennant's "Tour in Scotland," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 49.

² Th. Bisset, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, v. 84.

³ A. Stewart, in Sinclair's *Statistical*

Account of Scotland, xv. 517 note.

⁴ W. Gregor, "Notes on Beltane cakes," *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895), p. 2 sq. The Beltane cakes with the nine knobs on them remind us of the cake with twelve knobs which the Athenians offered

still kindled in the latter half of the eighteenth century; the herdsmen of several farms used to gather dry wood, kindle it, and dance three times "southways" about the burning pile.¹ But in this region, according to a later authority, the Beltane fires were lit not on the first but on the second of May, Old Style. They were called bone-fires. The people believed that on that evening and night the witches were abroad and busy casting spells on cattle and stealing cows' milk. To counteract their machinations, pieces of rowan tree and woodbine, but especially of rowan-tree, were placed over the doors of the cow-houses, and fires were kindled by every farmer and cottar. Old thatch, straw, furze, or broom was piled in a heap and set on fire a little after sunset. While some of the bystanders kept tossing the blazing mass, others hoisted portions of it on pitchforks or poles and ran hither and thither, holding them as high as they could. Meantime the young people danced round the fire or ran through the smoke shouting, "Fire! blaze and burn the witches; fire! fire! burn the witches." In some districts a large round cake of oat or barley meal was rolled through the ashes. When all the fuel was consumed, the people scattered the ashes far and wide, and till the night grew quite dark continued to run through them, crying, "Fire! burn the witches."²

The Beltane fires appear to have been kindled also in Ireland, for Cormac, "or somebody in his name, says that Beltane, May-day, was so called from the 'lucky fire,' or the 'two fires' which the Druids of Erin used to make on that day with great incantations; and cattle, he adds, used to be brought to those fires, or driven between them, as a safeguard against the diseases of the year."³ The first of May is a great popular festival in the more midland and southern parts of Sweden. On the eve of the festival, huge bonfires,

¹ Saturn (see above, p. 148). The King of the Bean on Twelfth Night was chosen by means of a cake, which was broken in as many pieces as there were persons present, and the person who received the piece containing a bean or a coin became king. See J. Boemus, *Mores, leges et ritus omnium gentium* (Lyons, 1541), p. 222; Brand,

Popular Antiquities, i. 22 sq.

² Shaw, in Pennant's "Tour in Scotland," printed in Pinkerton's *Travels and Travels*, iii. 136.

³ W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 167.

⁴ J. Rhys, "Manx folk-lore and superstitions," *Folk-lore*, ii. (1891), p. 303 sq.

which should be lighted by striking two flints together, blaze on all the hills and knolls. Every large hamlet has its own fire, round which the young people dance in a ring. The old folk notice whether the flames incline to the north or to the south. In the former case, the spring will be cold and backward ; in the latter, it will be mild and genial.¹ Similarly, in Bohemia, on the eve of May-day, young people kindle fires on hills and eminences, at crossways, and in pastures, and dance round them. They leap over the glowing embers or even through the flames. The ceremony is called "burning the witches."² We have to remember that the eve of May-day is the notorious Walpurgis Night, when the witches are everywhere speeding unseen through the air on their hellish errands. On this witching night children in Voigtland also light bonfires on the heights and leap over them. Moreover, they wave burning brooms or toss them into the air. So far as the light of the bonfire reaches, so far will a blessing rest on the fields.³ The kindling of the fires on Walpurgis Night is called "driving away the witches."³

But the season at which these fire-festivals have been most generally held all over Europe is the summer solstice, that is Midsummer Eve (the twenty-third of June) or Midsummer Day (the twenty-fourth of June). A faint tinge of Christianity has been given to them by naming Midsummer Day after St. John the Baptist, but we cannot doubt that the celebration dates from a time long before the beginning of our era. The summer solstice, or Midsummer Day, is the

¹ L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 233 sq.

² Br. Jelfnek, "Materialien zur Vorgeschichte und Volkskunde Böhmens," *Mittheilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxi. (1891), p. 13.

³ J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch, Aberglauben, Sagen und andre alte Ueberlieferungen im Voigtlande*, p. 373. The superstitions relating to witches at this season are legion. For instance, in Saxony and Thüringen any one who labours under a physical blemish can easily rid himself of it by transferring it to the witches on Walpurgis Night. He has only to go out

to a cross-road, make three crosses on the blemish, and say, "In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Thus the blemish, whatever it may be, is left behind him at the cross-road, and when the witches sweep by on their way to the Brocken, they must take it with them, and it sticks to them henceforth. Moreover, three crosses chalked up on the doors of houses and cattle-stalls on Walpurgis Night will effectually prevent any of the infernal crew from entering and doing harm to man or beast. See E. Sommer, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Sachsen und Thüringen*, p. 148! sq. : *Die gestriegelte Rocken-philosophie*, p. 116.

great turning-point in the sun's career, when, after climbing higher and higher day by day in the sky, the luminary stops and thenceforth retraces his steps down the heavenly road. Such a moment could not but be regarded with anxiety by primitive man so soon as he began to observe and ponder the courses of the great lights across the celestial vault; and having still to learn his own powerlessness in face of the vast cyclic changes of nature, he fancied that he might help the sun in his seeming decline—might prop his failing steps and rekindle the sinking flame of the red lamp in his feeble hand. In some such thoughts as these the midsummer festivals of our European peasantry may be supposed to have taken their rise. Whatever their origin, they have prevailed all over this quarter of the globe, from Ireland on the west to Russia on the east, and from Sweden on the north to Spain and Greece on the south. According to a mediæval writer, the three great features of the midsummer celebration were the bonfires, the procession with torches round the fields, and the custom of rolling a wheel. He tells us that boys burned bones and filth of various kinds to make a foul smoke, and that the smoke drove away certain noxious dragons which at this time, excited by the summer heat, copulated in the air and poisoned the wells and rivers by dropping their seed into them; and he explains the custom of trundling a wheel to mean that the sun, having now reached the highest point in the ecliptic, begins thenceforward to descend.¹ From his description, which still holds good, we see that the main features of the midsummer fire-festival resemble those which we have found to characterise the vernal festivals of fire. The similarity of the two sets of ceremonies will plainly appear from the following examples.

A writer of the sixteenth century informs us that in almost every village and town of Germany public bonfires were kindled on the Eve of St. John, and young and old, of

¹ Kemble, *The Saxons in England*, i. 361 *sq.*, quoting "an ancient MS. written in England, and now in the Harleian Collection, No. 2345. fol. 50." The passage is quoted in part by Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 298 *sq.*, and by Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 509. The explanation of the Mid-

summer fires as a means of dispersing the aerial dragons is given also by John Belet, a writer of the twelfth century. See J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 387. Compare Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ i. 516.

both sexes, gathered about them and passed the time in dancing and singing. People on this occasion wore chaplets of mugwort and vervain, and they looked at the fire through bunches of larkspur which they held in their hands, believing that this would preserve their eyes in a healthy state throughout the year. As each departed, he threw the mugwort and vervain into the fire, saying, "May all my ill-luck depart and be burnt up with these."¹ At Lower Konz, a village prettily situated on a hillside overlooking the Moselle, in the midst of a wood of walnut-trees and fruit-trees, the midsummer festival used to be celebrated as follows. A quantity of straw was collected on the top of the steep Stromberg Hill. Every inhabitant, or at least every householder, had to contribute his share of straw to the pile; a recusant was looked at askance, and if in the course of the year he happened to break a leg or lose a child, there was not a gossip in the village but knew the reason why. At nightfall the whole male population, men and boys, mustered on the top of the hill; the women and girls were not allowed to join them, but had to take up their position at a certain spring half-way down the slope. On the summit stood a huge wheel completely encased in some of the straw which had been jointly contributed by the villagers; the rest of the straw was made into torches. From each side of the wheel the axle-tree projected about three feet, thus furnishing handles to the lads who were to guide it in its descent. The mayor of the neighbouring town of Sierck, who always received a basket of cherries for his services, gave the signal; a lighted torch was applied to the wheel, and as it burst into flame, two young fellows, strong-limbed and swift of foot, seized the handles and began running with it down the slope. A great shout went up. Every man and boy waved a blazing torch in the air, and took care to keep it alight so long as the wheel was trundling down the hill. Some of them followed the fiery wheel, and watched with amusement the shifts to which its guides were put in steering it round the hollows and over the broken ground on the mountain-side. The great object of the young men who guided the

¹ J. Boemus, *Mores, leges et ritus omnium gentium* (Lyons, 1541), p. 225 sq.

wheel was to plunge it blazing into the water of the Moselle; but they rarely succeeded in their efforts, for the vineyards which cover the greater part of the declivity impeded their progress, and the wheel was often burned out before it reached the river. As it rolled past the women and girls at the spring, they raised cries of joy which were answered by the men on the top of the mountain; and the shouts were echoed by the inhabitants of neighbouring villages who watched the spectacle from their hills on the opposite bank of the Moselle. If the fiery wheel was successfully conveyed to the bank of the river and extinguished in the water, the people looked for an abundant vintage that year, and the inhabitants of Konz had the right to exact a waggon-load of white wine from the surrounding vineyards. On the other hand, they believed that, if they neglected to perform the ceremony, the cattle would be attacked by giddiness and convulsions and would dance in their stalls.¹

Down at least to some forty years ago the midsummer fires used to blaze all over Upper Bavaria. They were kindled especially on the mountains, but also far and wide in the lowlands, and we are told that in the darkness and stillness of night the moving groups, lit up by the flickering glow of the flames, presented an impressive spectacle. In some places the people showed their sense of the sanctity of the fires by using for fuel the trees past which the gay procession had defiled, with fluttering banners, on Corpus Christi Day. In others the children collected the firewood from door to door on the eve of the festival, singing their request for fuel at every house in doggerel verse. Cattle were driven through the fire to cure the sick animals and to guard such as were sound against plague and harm of every kind throughout the year. Many a householder on that day put out the fire on the domestic hearth and rekindled it by means of a brand taken from the midsummer bonfire.

¹ Tessier, "Sur la fête annuelle de la roue flamboyante de la Saint-Jean, à Basse-Konz, arrondissement de Thionville," *Mémoires et dissertations publiés par la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France*, v. (1823), pp. 379-393. Tessier witnessed the ceremony, 23rd June 1822 (not 1823, as is sometimes stated). His

account has been reproduced more or less fully by Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ l. 515 sq.), Mannhardt (*Baumkultus*, p. 510 sq.), and H. Gaidoz ("Le dieu gaulois du Soleil et le symbolisme de la Roue," *Revue Archéologique*, lii. Série, iv. (1884), p. 24 sq.).

The people judged of the height to which the flax would grow in the year by the height to which the flames of the bonfire rose ; and whoever leaped over the burning pile was sure not to suffer from backache in reaping the corn at harvest. But it was especially the practice for lovers to spring over the fire hand in hand, and the way in which each couple made the leap was the subject of many a jest and many a superstition. In one district the custom of kindling the bonfires was combined with that of lighting wooden discs and hurling them in the air after the manner which prevails at some of the spring festivals.¹ In many parts of Bavaria it was believed that the flax would grow as high as the young people leaped over the fire.² In others the old folk used to plant three charred sticks from the bonfire in the fields, believing that this would make the flax grow tall.³ Elsewhere an extinguished brand was put in the roof of the house to protect it against fire. In the towns about Würzburg the bonfires used to be kindled in the market-places, and the young people who jumped over them wore garlands of flowers, especially of mugwort and vervain, and carried sprigs of larkspur in their hands. They thought that such as looked at the fire holding a bit of larkspur before their face would be troubled by no malady of the eyes throughout the year.⁴ Further, it was customary at Würzburg, in the sixteenth century, for the bishop's followers to throw burning discs of wood into the air from a mountain which overhangs the town. The discs were discharged by means of flexible rods, and in their flight through the darkness presented the appearance of fiery dragons.⁵

In the valley of the Lech, which divides Upper Bavaria from Swabia, the midsummer customs and beliefs are, or used to be, very similar. Bonfires are kindled on the

¹ *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, i. 373 sq. As to the burning discs at the spring festivals, see above, p. 243.

² *Op. cit.* ii. 260 sq., iii. 936, 956, iv. 2, p. 360.

³ *Op. cit.* ii. 260.

⁴ *Op. cit.* iv. i. p. 242. We have seen (p. 267) that in the sixteenth

century these customs and beliefs were common in Germany. It is also a German superstition that a house which contains a brand from the midsummer bonfire will not be struck by lightning (*J. W. Wolf, Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. p. 217, § 185).

⁵ *J. Boemus, Flores, leges et ritus omnium gentium* (Lyons, 1541), p. 226.

mountains on Midsummer Day; and besides the bonfire a tall beam, thickly wrapt in straw and surmounted by a cross-piece, is burned in many places. Round this cross as it burns the lads dance with loud shouts; and when the flames have subsided, the young people leap over the fire in pairs, a young man and a young woman together. If they escape unsmirched, the man will not suffer from fever, and the girl will not become a mother within the year. Further, it is believed that the flax will grow that year as high as they leap over the fire; and that if a charred billet be taken from the fire and stuck in a flax-field it will promote the growth of the flax.¹ Similarly in Swabia, lads and lasses, hand in hand, leap over the midsummer bonfire, praying that the hemp may grow three ells high, and they set fire to wheels of straw and send them rolling down the hill.² At Deffingen, in Swabia, as they sprang over the midsummer bonfire they cried out, "Flax, flax! may the flax this year grow seven ells high!"³ Near Offenburg, in the Black Forest, on Midsummer Day the village boys used to collect faggots and straw on some steep and conspicuous height, and they spent some time in making circular wooden discs by slicing the trunk of a pine-tree across. When darkness had fallen, they kindled the bonfire, and then, as it blazed up, they lighted the discs at it, and, after swinging them to and fro at the end of a stout and supple hazel-wand, they hurled them one after the other, whizzing and flaming, into the air, where they described great arcs of fire, to fall at length, like shooting-stars, at the foot of the mountain.⁴ In many parts of Elsass and Lorraine the midsummer fires still blaze annually.⁵ At Speicher in the Eifel, a district which lies on the middle Rhine, to the west of Coblenz, a bonfire used to be kindled in front of the village on St. John's Day, and all the young people had to jump over it.

¹ Leoprechting, *Aus dem Lechrain*, p. 181 sqq.; *B.K.* p. 510.

² Birlinger, *Völkethümliches aus Schwaben*, ii. p. 96 sqq., § 128, p. 103 sq.; § 129; *id.*, *Aus Schwaben*, ii. 116-120; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 423 sqq.; *B.K.* p. 510.

³ Fehrer, *Beitrag zur deutschen*

Mythologie, i. p. 215 sq., § 242; ii. 549.

⁴ H. Gaidoz, "Le dieu Gaulois du Soleil et le symbolisme de la Roue," *Revue Archéologique*, iii. Série, iv. (1884), p. 29 sq.

⁵ "Die Sommerwendfeier im St. Amandthal," *Der Urquell*, N.F., i. (1897), p. 181 sqq.

Those who failed to do so were not allowed to join the rest in begging for eggs from house to house. Where no eggs were given, they drove a wedge into the keyhole of the door. On this day children in the Eifel used also to gather flowers in the fields, weave them into garlands, and throw the garlands on the roofs or hang them on the doors of the houses. So long as the flowers remained there, they were supposed to guard the house from fire and lightning.¹ In the southern Harz district and in Thüringen the midsummer or St. John's fires used to be commonly lighted some fifty years ago, and the custom has probably not died out. At Edersleben, near Sangerhausen, a high pole was planted in the ground and a tar-barrel was hung from it by a chain which reached to the ground. The barrel was then set on fire and swung round the pole amid shouts of joy.²

According to one account, German tradition required that the midsummer fire should be lighted, not from a common hearth, but by the friction of two sorts of wood, namely oak and fir.³ In some old farm-houses of the Surenthal and Winenthal a couple of bores or a whole row of them may be seen facing each other in the door-posts of the barn or stable. Sometimes the holes are smooth and round; sometimes they are deeply burnt and blackened. The explanation of them is this. About midsummer, but especially on Midsummer Day, two such holes are bored opposite each other, into which the extremities of a strong pole are fixed. The holes are then stuffed with tow steeped in resin and oil; a rope is looped round the pole, and two young men, who must be brothers or must have the same baptismal name, and must be of the same age, pull the ends of the rope backwards and forwards so as to make the pole revolve rapidly, till smoke and sparks issue from the two holes in the door-posts. The sparks are caught and blown up with tinder, and this is the new and pure fire, the appearance of which is greeted with cries of joy. Heaps of combustible materials are now ignited with the new fire, and

¹ Schmütz, *Sitten und Sagen, Lieder, Sprichwörter und Räthsel des Eifler Volkes*, i. 40 sq. According to one writer, the garlands are composed of St. John's wort (Montanus, *Die*

deutschen Volksfeste, p. 33).

² Kuhn and Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 390.

³ Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste*, p. 33 sq.

blazing bundles are placed on boards and sent floating down the brook. The boys light torches at the new fire and run to fumigate the pastures. This is believed to drive away all the demons and witches that molest the cattle. Finally the torches are thrown in a heap on the meadow and allowed to burn out. On their way back the boys strew the ashes over the fields, which is supposed to make them fertile. If a farmer has taken possession of a new house, or if servants have changed masters, the boys fumigate the new abode and are rewarded by the farmer with a supper.¹

In Austria the midsummer customs and superstitions resemble those of Germany. Thus in some parts of the Tyrol bonfires are kindled and burning discs hurled into the air.² At Reutte, in the Tyrol, people believed that the flax would grow as high as they leaped over the midsummer bonfire, and they took pieces of charred wood from the fire and stuck them in their flax-fields the same night, leaving them there till the flax harvest had been got in.³ In Lower Austria fires are lit in the fields, commonly in front of a cross, and the people dance and sing round them and throw flowers into the flames. Before each handful of flowers is tossed into the fire, a set speech is made; then the dance is resumed and the dancers sing in chorus the last words of the speech. At evening bonfires are kindled on the heights, and the boys caper round them, brandishing lighted torches drenched in pitch. Whoever jumps thrice across the fire will not suffer from fever within the year. Cart-wheels are often smeared with pitch, ignited, and sent rolling and blazing down the hillsides.⁴ All over Bohemia bonfires still burn on Midsummer Eve. Sometimes the young men fell a tall straight fir in the woods and set it up on a height, where the girls deck it with nosegays, wreaths of leaves, and red ribbons. Then brushwood is piled about it, and at nightfall the whole is set on fire. While the flames break out, the young men climb the tree and fetch down the wreaths which the girls had placed on it. After that, lads

¹ Kochholz, *Deutscher Glaube und Brauch*, ii. 144 sqq.

² Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,² ii. p. 159, § 1354.

³ Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. p. 210, § 231.

⁴ Vernalcken, *Mythen und Bräuche des Volkes in Oesterreich*, p. 307 sq.

and lasses stand on opposite sides of the fire and look at one another through the wreaths to see whether they will be true to each other and marry within the year. Also the girls throw the wreaths across the flames to the men, and woe to the awkward swain who fails to catch the wreath thrown him by his sweetheart. When the blaze has died down, each couple takes hands, and leaps thrice across the fire. The singed wreaths are taken home and carefully preserved throughout the year. During thunderstorms a bit of the wreath is burned on the hearth with a prayer; some of it is given to kine that are sick or calving, and some of it serves to fumigate house and cattle-stall, that man and beast may keep hale and well. Sometimes an old cart-wheel is smeared with resin, ignited, and sent rolling down the hill. Often the boys collect all the worn-out besoms they can get hold of, dip them in pitch, and having set them on fire wave them about or throw them high into the air. Or they rush down the hillside in troops, brandishing the flaming brooms and shouting, only however to return to the bonfire on the summit when the brooms have burnt out. The stumps of the brooms and embers from the fire are preserved and stuck in cabbage gardens to protect the cabbages from caterpillars and gnats. Some people insert charred sticks and ashes from the bonfire in their sown fields and meadows, in their gardens and the roofs of their houses, as a talisman against foul weather; or they fancy that the ashes placed in the roof will prevent any fire from breaking out in the house. In some districts they crown or gird themselves with mugwort while the midsummer fire is burning, for this is supposed to be a protection against ghosts, witches, and sickness; in particular, a wreath of mugwort is a sure preventive of sore eyes. Sometimes the girls look at the bonfires through garlands of wild flowers, praying the fire to strengthen their eyes and eyelids. She who does this thrice will have no sore eyes all that year. In some parts of Bohemia they used to drive the cows through the midsummer fire to guard them against witchcraft.¹ In Austrian Silesia the custom also prevails of

¹ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ i. *des Volkes in Oesterreich*, p. 308; 519; Varnaleken, *Mythen und Bräuche* Reinsberg-Dittlingsfeld, *Fest-Kalender*

lighting great bonfires on hilltops on Midsummer Eve, and here too the boys swing blazing besoms or hurl them high in the air, while they shout and leap and dance wildly. Next morning every door is decked with flowers and birchen saplings.¹ In the district of Cracow, especially towards the Carpathian Mountains, great fires are kindled by the peasants in the fields or on the heights at nightfall on Midsummer Eve, which among them goes by the name of Kupalo's Night. The fire must be kindled by the friction of two sticks. The young people dance round or leap over it; and a band of sturdy fellows run a race with lighted torches, the winner being rewarded with a peacock's feather, which he keeps throughout the year as a distinction. Cattle also are driven round the fire in the belief that this is a charm against pestilence and disease of every sort.²

The name of Kupalo's Night, applied in this part of Galicia to Midsummer Eve, reminds us that we have now passed from German to Slavonic ground; even in Bohemia the midsummer celebration is common to Slavs and Germans. We have already seen that in Russia the summer solstice or Eve of St. John is celebrated by young men and maidens, who jump over a bonfire in couples carrying a straw effigy of Kupalo in their arms.³ In some parts of Russia the young folk wear garlands of flowers and girdles of holy herbs when they spring through the smoke or flames; and sometimes they drive the cattle also through the fire in order to protect the animals against wizards and witches, who are then ravenous after milk.⁴ In Little Russia a stake is driven into the ground on St. John's Night, wrapt in straw, and set on fire. As the flames rise the peasant women throw birchen boughs into them, saying, "May my flax be as tall as this bough!"⁵ In

aus *Bahmen*, pp. 306-311; Dr. Jelinek, "Materialien zur Vorgeschichte und Volkskunde Böhmens," *Mittheilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxi, (1891), p. 13.

¹ A. Peter, *Volksheimliches aus österreichisch-Schlesien*, ii. 287. Compare Philo vom Walde, *Schlesien in Sage und Brauch*, p. 124.

Th. Vornaleken, *Mythen und*

Bräuche des Volkes in Oesterreich, p. 308 sq.

³ Vol. ii. p. 105. Compare M. Kowalevsky, in *Folk-lore*, i. (1890), p. 467.

⁴ Grimm, *D.M.* i. 519; Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 240, 391.

⁵ Ralston, *op. cit.* p. 240.

Ruthenia the bonfires are lighted by a flame procured by the friction of wood. While the elders of the party are engaged in thus "churning" the fire, the rest maintain a respectful silence; but when the flame bursts from the wood, they break forth into joyous songs. As soon as the bonfires are kindled, the young people take hands and leap in pairs through the smoke, if not through the flames; and after that the cattle in their turn are driven through the fire.¹ In many parts of Prussia and Lithuania great fires are kindled on Midsummer Eve. All the heights are ablaze with them, as far as the eye can see. The fires are supposed to be a protection against witchcraft, thunder, hail, and cattle disease, especially if next morning the cattle are driven over the places where the fires burned. Above all, the bonfires ensure the farmer against the arts of witches, who try to steal the milk from his cows by charms and spells. That is why next morning you may see the young fellows who lit the bonfire going from house to house and receiving jugfuls of milk. And for the same reason they stick burs and mugwort on the gate or the hedge through which the cows go to pasture, because that is supposed to be a preservative against witchcraft.² In Masuren, a district of Eastern Prussia inhabited by a branch of the Polish family, it is the custom on the evening of Midsummer Day to put out all the fires in the village. Then an oaken stake is driven into the ground and a wheel is fixed on it as on an axle. This wheel the villagers, working by relays, cause to revolve with great rapidity till fire is produced by friction. Every one takes home a lighted brand from the new fire and with it rekindles the fire on the domestic hearth.³ Among the Letts who inhabit the Baltic provinces of Russia the most joyful festival of the year is held on Midsummer Day. The people drink and dance and sing and adorn themselves and their houses with flowers and branches. Chopped boughs of fir are strewn about the rooms, and leaves are stuck in the roofs. In every farm-yard a birch tree is set up, and every person of the name of John who

¹ Kallston, *loc.*

² Tettau und Temme. *Die Volks-sagen Ostpreussens, Lithauens und*

Westpreussens, p. 277.

³ Töppen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² p. 71.

enters the farm that day must break off a twig from the tree and hang up on its branches in return a small present for the family. When the serene twilight of the summer night has veiled the landscape, bonfires gleam on all the hills, and wild shouts of "Ligho! Ligho!" echo from the woods and fields. In Riga the day is a festival of flowers. From all the neighbourhood the peasants stream into the city laden with flowers and garlands. A market of flowers is held in an open square and on the chief bridge over the river; here wreaths of immortelles, which grow wild in the meadows and woods, are sold in great profusion and deck the houses of Riga for long afterwards. Roses too are now at the prime of their beauty, and masses of them adorn the flower-stalls. Till far into the night gay crowds parade the streets to music or float on the river in gondolas decked with flowers.¹ In Servia on Midsummer Eve herdsmen light torches of birch bark and march round the sheepfolds and cattle-stalls; then they climb the hills and there allow the torches to burn out.²

Among the Magyars in Hungary the midsummer fire-festival is marked by the same features that meet us in so many parts of Europe. On Midsummer Eve in many places it is customary to kindle bonfires on heights and to leap over them, and from the manner in which the young people leap the bystanders predict whether they will marry soon. At Nograd-Ludany the young men and women go out, each carrying a truss of straw, to a meadow, where they pile the straw in seven or twelve heaps and set it on fire. Then they go round the fire singing, and hold a bunch of iron-wort in the smoke, while they say, "No boil on my body, no sprain in my foot!" This holding of the flowers over the flames is regarded, we are told, as equally important with the practice of walking through the fire barefoot and stamping it out. On this day also many Hungarian swineherds make fire by rotating a wheel round a wooden axle wrapt in hemp, and through the fire thus made they drive their pigs to preserve them from sickness.³ In villages on

¹ J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, i. 178-180, ii. 24 sq. Ligho was an old heathen deity, whose joyous festival used to fall in spring.

² Grimm, *D.M.* i. 519.

³ H. von Wlislöcki, *Volksglanbe und religiöser Brauch der Magyaren* (Münster i. W., 1893), pp. 40-44.

the Danube, where the population is a cross between Magyar and German, the young men and maidens repair to the high banks of the river on Midsummer Eve; and while the girls post themselves low down the slope, the lads on the height above set fire to little wooden wheels and, after swinging them to and fro at the end of a wand, send them whirling through the air to fall into the Danube. As he does so, each lad sings out the name of his sweetheart, and she listens well pleased down below.¹ The Esthonians of Russia, who, like the Magyars, belong to the great Turanian family of mankind, also celebrate the summer solstice in the usual way. On the Eve of St. John all the people of a farm, a village, or an estate, walk solemnly in procession, the girls decked with flowers, the men with leaves and carrying bundles of straw under their arms. The lads carry lighted torches or flaming hoops steeped in tar at the top of long poles. Thus they go singing to the cattle-sheds, the granaries, and so forth, and afterwards march thrice round the dwelling-house. Finally, preceded by the shrill music of the bagpipes and shawms, they repair to a neighbouring hill, where the materials of a bonfire have been collected. Tar-barrels filled with combustibles are hung on poles, or the trunk of a felled tree has been set up with a great mass of juniper piled about it in the form of a pyramid. When a light has been set to the pile, old and young gather about it and pass the time merrily with song and music till break of day. Every one who comes brings fresh fuel for the fire, and they say, "Now we all gather together, where St. John's fire burns. He who comes not to St. John's fire will have his barley full of thistles, and his oats full of weeds." Three logs are thrown into the fire with special ceremony; in throwing the first they say, "Gold of pleasure (a plant with yellow flowers) into the fire!" in throwing the second they say, "Weeds to the unploughed land!" but in throwing the third they cry, "Flax on my field!" The fire is said to keep the witches from the cattle.² According to others, it

¹ A. von Ipolyi, "Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie aus Ungarn," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853), p. 270 sq.

² J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, ii. 268 sq.; F. J. Wiedemann, *Aus dem innern und äussern Leben der Esten*, p. 362.

ensures that for the whole year the milk shall be "as pure as silver and as the stars in the sky, and the butter as yellow as the sun and the fire and the gold."¹ In the Esthonian island of Oesel, while they throw fuel into the midsummer fire, they call out, "Weeds to the fire, flax to the field," or they fling three billets into the flames, saying, "Flax grow long!" And they take charred sticks from the bonfire home with them and keep them to make the cattle thrive. In some parts of the island the bonfire is formed by piling brushwood and other combustibles round a tree, at the top of which a flag flies. Whoever succeeds in knocking down the flag with a pole before it begins to burn will have good luck. Formerly the festivities lasted till daybreak, and ended in scenes of debauchery which looked doubly hideous by the growing light of a summer morning.² Still farther north, among a people of the same Turanian stock, we learn from an eye-witness that Midsummer Night used to witness a sort of witches' sabbath on the top of every hill in Finland. The bonfire was made by setting up four tall birches in a square and piling the intermediate space with fuel. Round the roaring flames the people sang and drank and pranced in the usual way.³ Farther east, in the valley of the Volga, the Cheremiss celebrate about midsummer a festival which Haxthausen regarded as identical with the midsummer ceremonies of the rest of Europe. A sacred tree in the forest, generally a tall and solitary oak, marks the scene of the solemnity. All the males assemble there, but no woman may be present. A heathen priest lights seven fires in a row from north-west to south-east; cattle are sacrificed and their blood poured in the fires, each of which is dedicated to a separate deity. Afterwards the holy tree is illumined by lighted candles placed on its branches; the people fall on their knees and with faces bowed to the earth pray that God would be

The word which I have translated "weeds" is *Thaugrus*. Apparently it is the name of a special kind of weed.

¹ Fr. Krentzwald and H. Neus, *Mythische und Magische Lieder der Esten* (St. Petersburg, 1854), p. 62.

² Holzmayer, "Osilana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesell-*

schaft zu Dorpat, vii. (1872), p. 62 sq. Wiedemann also observes that the sports in which young couples engage in the woods on this evening are not always decorous (*Aus dem inneren und äusseren Leben der Esten*, p. 362).

³ J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, ii. 447 sq.

pleased to bless them, their children, their cattle, and their bees, grant them success in trade, in travel, and in the chase, enable them to pay the Czar's taxes, and so forth.¹

When we pass from the east to the west of Europe we still find the summer solstice celebrated with rites of the same general character. About half a century ago the custom of lighting bonfires at midsummer prevailed so commonly in France that there was hardly a town or a village, we are told, where they were not kindled.² In Brittany the custom is kept up to this day. Thus in Lower Brittany every town and every village still lights its *tantad* or boufire on St. John's Night. When the flames have died down, the whole assembly kneels round about the bonfire and an old man prays aloud. Then they all rise and march thrice round the fire; at the third turn they stop and every one picks up a pebble and throws it on the burning pile. After that they disperse.³ At Quimper, and in the district of Léon, chairs used to be placed round the midsummer bonfire, that the souls of the dead might sit on them and warm themselves at the blaze.⁴ At Brest on this day thousands of people used to assemble on the ramparts towards evening and brandish lighted torches, which they swung in circles or flung by hundreds into the air. The closing of the town gates put an end to the spectacle, and the lights might be seen dispersing in all directions like wandering will-o'-the-wisps.⁵ In Upper Brittany the materials for the midsummer bonfires, which generally consist of bundles of furze and heath, are furnished by voluntary contributions, and piled on the tops of hills round poles, each of which is surmounted by a nosegay or a crown. This nosegay or crown is generally provided by a man named John or a woman named Jean,

¹ J. G. Georgi, *Beschreibung aller Nationen des russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1776), p. 36; von Haxlhausen, *Studien über die innere Zustände, etc., Russlands*, i. 446 sqq.

² De Nore, *Coutumes, mythes et traditions des provinces de France*, p. 19.

³ A. Le Braz, *La Légende de la Mort en Basse-Bretagne* (Paris, 1893), p. 279. For an explanation of the

custom of throwing a pebble into the fire, see below, p. 296.

⁴ J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. p. 217. § 185; A. Breuil, "Du Culte de St. Jean Baptiste," *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, viii. (Amiens, 1845), p. 189 sq.

⁵ E. Coniet, *Essai sur les fêtes religieuses*, p. 216.

and it is always a John or a Jean who puts a light to the bonfire. While the fire is blazing the people dance and sing round it, and when the flames have subsided they leap over the glowing embers. Charred sticks from the bonfire are thrown into wells to improve the water, and they are also taken home as a protection against thunder.¹ To make them thoroughly effective, however, against thunder and lightning you should keep them near your bed, between a bit of a Twelfth Night cake and a sprig of boxwood which has been blessed on Palm Sunday.² Flowers from the nose-gay or crown which overhung the fire are accounted charms against disease and pain, both bodily and spiritual; hence girls hang them at their breast by a thread of scarlet wool. In many parishes of Brittany the priest used to go in procession with the crucifix and kindle the bonfire with his own hands; and farmers were wont to drive their flocks and herds through the fire in order to preserve them from sickness till midsummer of the following year. Also it was believed that every girl who danced round nine of the bonfires would marry within the year.³ In Normandy the midsummer fires have now almost disappeared, at least in the district known as the Bocage, but they used to shine on every hill. They were commonly made by piling brushwood, broom, and ferns about a tall tree, which was decorated with a crown of moss and sometimes with flowers. While they burned, people danced and sang round them, and young folk leaped over the flames or the glowing ashes. In the valley of the Orne the custom was to kindle the bonfire just at the moment when the sun was about to dip below the horizon; and the peasants drove their cattle through the fires to protect them against witchcraft, especially against the spells of witches and wizards who attempted to steal the milk and butter.⁴

At Jumièges in Normandy, down to about sixty years ago, the midsummer festival was marked by certain singular features which bore the stamp of a very high antiquity.

¹ Sébillot, *Contumes populaires de la Haute-Bretagne*, pp. 192-195. In Upper Brittany these bonfires are called *riens* or *raviers*.

² De Nore, *op. cit.* p. 219; Cortet, *op. cit.* p. 216.

³ De Nore, *Contumes, mythes et traditions des provinces de France*, pp. 219, 228, 231; Cortet, *op. cit.* p. 215 sq.

⁴ J. Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 219-224.

Every year, on the twenty-third of June, the Eve of St. John, the Brotherhood of the Green Wolf chose a new chief or master, who had always to be taken from the hamlet of Conihout. On being elected the new head of the brotherhood took the title of the Green Wolf, and assumed a peculiar costume consisting of a long green mantle and a very tall green hat of a conical shape and without a brim. Thus arrayed he stalked solemnly at the head of the brothers, chanting the hymn of St. John, the crucifix and holy banner leading the way, to a place called Chouquet. Here the procession was met by the priest, precentors, and choir, who conducted the brotherhood to the parish church. After hearing mass the company adjourned to the house of the Green Wolf, where a simple repast, such as is required by the church on fast-days, was served up to them. Then they danced before the door till it was time to light the bonfire. Night being come, the fire was kindled to the sound of hand-bells by a young man and a young woman, both decked with flowers. As the flames rose, the *Te Deum* was sung, and a villager thundered out a parody in the Norman dialect of the hymn *ut queant laxis*. Meantime the Green Wolf and his brothers, with their hoods down on their shoulders and holding each other by the hand, ran round the fire after the man who had been chosen to be the Green Wolf of the following year. Though only the first and the last man of the chain had a hand free, their business was to surround and seize thrice the future Green Wolf, who in his efforts to escape belaboured the brothers with a long wand which he carried. When at last they succeeded in catching him they carried him to the burning pile and made as if they would throw him on it. This ceremony over, they returned to the house of the Green Wolf, where a supper, still of the most meagre fare, was set before them. Up till midnight a sort of religious solemnity prevailed. No unbecoming word might fall from the lips of any of the company, and a censor, armed with a hand-bell, was appointed to mark and punish instantly any infraction of the rule. But at the stroke of twelve all this was changed. Constraint gave way to licence; pious hymns were replaced by Bacchanalian ditties, and the shrill quavering notes of the

village fiddle hardly rose above the roar of voices that went up from the merry brotherhood of the Green Wolf. Next day, the twenty-fourth of June or Midsummer Day, was celebrated by the same personages with the same noisy gaiety. One of the ceremonies consisted in parading, to the sound of musketry, an enormous loaf of consecrated bread, which, rising in tiers, was surmounted by a pyramid of verdure adorned with ribbons. After that the holy hand-bells, deposited on the step of the altar, were entrusted as insignia of office to the man who was to be the Green Wolf next year.¹

In the canton of Breteuil in Picardy the priest used to kindle the midsummer bonfire, and the people marched thrice round it in procession. Some of them took ashes of the fire home with them to protect the houses against lightning.² In the department of the Ardennes every one used to contribute his faggot to the midsummer bonfire, and the clergy marched at the head of the procession to kindle it. Failure to light the fires would, in the popular belief, have exposed the fields to the greatest danger. At Revin the young folk, besides dancing round the fire to the strains of the village fiddler, threw garlands of flowers across the flames to each other.³ In the Vosges it is still customary to kindle bonfires upon the hill-tops on Midsummer Eve; the people believe that the fires help to preserve the fruits of the earth and ensure good crops.⁴ In the Jura Mountains the midsummer bonfires went by the name of *bâ* or *beau*. They were lit on the most conspicuous points of the landscape.⁵

near St. Jean, in the Jura, it appears that at this season young people still repair to the cross-roads and heights, and there wave burning torches so as to present the appearance

¹ This description is quoted by Madame Clément (*Histoire des fêtes civiles et religieuses, etc., de la Belgique Méridionale* (Avesnes, 1846), pp. 394-396); F. Liebrecht (*Gervasius von Tilbury*, p. 209 sq.); and W. Mannhardt (*Antike Wald und Feldkult*, p. 323 sqq.) from the *Magasin pittoresque*, Paris, viii. (1840), p. 287 sqq. A slightly condensed account is given, from the same source, by Cortet (*Essai sur les fêtes religieuses*, p. 221 sq.).

² Babin, quoted by Breuil, in *Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Picardie*, viii. (1845), p. 191 note.

³ A. Meyrac, *Traditions, Coutumes, Légendes, et Contes des Ardennes*, p. 88 sq.

⁴ L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes Vosges*, p. 186.

⁵ D. Monnier, *Traditions populaires comparées*, p. 207 sqq.; Cortet, *Essai sur les fêtes religieuses*, p. 217 sq.

of fiery wheels in the darkness.¹ In Berry, a district of Central France, the midsummer fire was lit on the Eve of St. John and went by the name of the *jônée*, *joannée*, or *jouannée*. Every family according to its means contributed faggots, which were piled round a pole on the highest place in the neighbourhood. In the hamlets the office of kindling the fire devolved on the oldest man, but in the towns it was the priest or the mayor who discharged the duty. Here, as in Brittany, people supposed that a girl who had danced round nine of the midsummer bonfires would marry within the year. To leap several times over the fire was regarded as a sort of purification which kept off sickness and brought good luck to the leaper. Hence the nimble youth bounded through the smoke and flames, and when the fire had somewhat abated parents jumped across it with their children in their arms in order that the little ones might also partake of its beneficent influence. Embers from the extinct bonfire were taken home, and after being dipped in holy water were kept as a talisman against all kinds of misfortune, but especially against lightning.² The same virtue was ascribed to the ashes and charred sticks of the midsummer bonfire in Périgord, where everybody contributed his share of fuel to the pile and the whole was crowned with flowers, especially with roses and lilies.³

Bonfires were lit in almost all the hamlets of Poitou on the Eve of St. John. People marched round them thrice, carrying a branch of walnut in their hand. Shepherdesses and children passed sprigs of mullein (*verbascum*) and nuts across the flames; the nuts were supposed to cure toothache, and the mullein to protect the cattle from sickness and sorcery. When the fire died down people took some of the ashes home with them, either to keep them in the house as a preservative against thunder or to scatter them on the fields for the purpose of destroying corn-cockles and darnel. Stones were also placed round the fire, and it was believed that the first to lift one of

¹ Béranger-Féraud, *Reminiscences populaires de la Provence*, p. 142.

² Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France*, i. 78 sqq. The writer adopts the absurd derivation of *jônée* from Janus. Need-

less to say that our old friend Baal, Ilcl, or Belus figures prominently in this and many other accounts of the European fire-festivals.

³ De Nore, *op. cit.* p. 150.

these stones next morning would find under it the hair of St. John.¹ In Poitou also it used to be customary on the Eve of St. John to trundle a blazing wheel wrapt in straw over the fields to fertilise them.² This last custom is said to be now extinct,³ but it is still usual in Poitou to kindle fires on this day at cross-roads or on the heights. The oldest or youngest person present sets a light to the pile, which consists of broom, gorse, and heath. A bright and crackling blaze shoots up, but soon dies down, and over it the young folk leap. They also throw stones into it, picking the stone according to the size of the turnips that they wish to have that year. It is said that "the good Virgin" comes and sits on the prettiest of the stones, and next morning they see there her beautiful golden tresses. At Lussac, in Poitou, the lighting of the midsummer bonfire is still an affair of some ceremony. A pyramid of faggots is piled round a tree or tall pole on the ground where the fair is held; the priest goes in procession to the spot and kindles the pile. When prayers have been said and the clergy have withdrawn, the people continue to march round the fire, telling their beads, but it is not till the flames have begun to die down that the youth jump over them. A brand from the midsummer bonfire is supposed to be a preservative against thunder.⁴

In the department of Vienne the bonfire was kindled by the oldest man, and before the dance round the flames began it was the custom to pass across them a great bunch of mullein (*bonillon blanc*) and a branch of walnut, which next morning before sunrise were fastened over the door of the chief cattle-shed.⁵ A similar custom prevailed in the neighbouring department of Deux-Sèvres; but here it was the priest who kindled the bonfire, and old men used to put embers of the fire

¹ Guerry, "Sur les usages et traditions du Poitou," *Mémoires et Dissertations publiées par la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France*, viii. (1829), p. 451 sq.

² Breuil, in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, viii. (1845), p. 206; Cortet, *op. cit.* p. 216; Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France*, i. 83; Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 225.

³ H. Galloz, "Le dieu gantois du soleil et le symbolisme de la roue," *Revue Archéologique*, iii. Série, iv. (1884), p. 26, note 3.

⁴ L. Pineau, *Le Folk-lore du Poitou* (Paris, 1892), p. 499 sq. In Périgord the ashes of the midsummer bonfire are searched for the hair of the Virgin (Cortet, *Essai sur les fêtes religieuses*, p. 219).

⁵ De Nore, *op. cit.* p. 149 sq.; Cortet, *op. cit.* p. 218 sq.

in their wooden shoes as a preservative against many evils.¹ In some towns and villages of Saintonge and Aunis, provinces of Western France now mostly comprised in the department of Charente Inférieure, the fires of St. John are still kindled on Midsummer Eve, but the custom is neither so common nor carried out with so much pomp and ceremony as formerly. Great quantities of wood used to be piled on an open space round about a huge post or a tree stripped of its leaves and branches. Every one took care to contribute a faggot to the pile, and the whole population marched to the spot in procession with the crucifix at their head and the priest bringing up the rear. The squire, or other person of high degree, put the torch to the pyre, and the priest blessed it. In the southern and eastern parts of Saintonge children and cattle were passed through the smoke of the bonfires to preserve them from contagious diseases, and when the fire had gone out the people scuffled for the charred fragments of the great post, which they regarded as talismans against thunder. Next morning, on Midsummer Day, every shepherdess in the neighbourhood was up very early, for the first to drive her sheep over the blackened cinders and ashes of the great bonfire was sure to have the best flock all that year. Where the shepherds shrunk from driving their flocks through the smoke and flames of the bonfire they contented themselves with marking the hinder-quarters of the animals with a broom which had been blackened in the ashes.²

In the mountainous part of Comminges, a province of Southern France, now comprised in the department of Haute Garonne, the midsummer fire is made by splitting open the trunk of a tall tree, stuffing the crevice with shavings, and igniting the whole. A garland of flowers is fastened to the top of the tree, and at the moment when the fire is lighted the man who was last married has to climb up a ladder and bring the flowers down. In the flat parts of the same district the materials of the midsummer bonfires consist of fuel piled in the usual way; but

¹ Dupin, "Notice sur quelques fêtes et divertissemens populaires du département des Deux-Sèvres," *Mémoires et Dissertations publiés par la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France*, iv.

(1823), p. 110.

² J. L. M. Noguès, *Les mœurs d'autrefois en Saintonge et en Aunis* (Saintes, 1891), pp. 72, 178 sq.

they must be put together by men who have been married since the last midsummer festival, and each of these benedicts is obliged to lay a wreath of flowers on the top of the pile. In some districts of the French Pyrenees it is deemed necessary to leap nine times over the midsummer fire if you would be assured of prosperity.² In Provence the midsummer fires are still popular. Children go from door to door begging for fuel, and they are seldom sent empty away. Formerly the priest, the mayor, and the aldermen used to walk in procession to the bonfire, and even deigned to light it; after which the assembly marched thrice round the burning pile, while the church bells pealed and rockets fizzed and sputtered in the air. Dancing began later, and the bystanders threw water on each other. At Ciotat, while the fire was blazing, the young people plunged into the sea and splashed each other vigorously. At Vitrolles they bathed in a pond in order that they might not suffer from fever during the year, and at Saintes-Maries they watered the horses to protect them from the itch.³ At Aix a nominal king, chosen from among the youth for his skill in shooting at a popinjay, presided over the festival. He selected his own officers, and escorted by a brilliant train marched to the bonfire, kindled it, and was the first to dance round it. Next day he distributed largesse to his followers. His reign lasted a year, during which he enjoyed certain privileges. He was allowed to attend the mass celebrated by the commander of the Knights of St. John on St. John's Day; the right of hunting was accorded to him; and soldiers might not be quartered in his house. At Marseilles also on this day one of the guilds chose a king of the *badache* or double axe; but it does not appear that he kindled the bonfire, which is said to have been lighted with great ceremony by

¹ H. Gaidoz, "Le dieu soleil et le symbolisme de la roue," *Revue Archéologique*, iii. Série, iv. (1884), p. 30.

² De Nore, *op. cit.* p. 127.

³ De Nore, *Coutumes, mythes et traditions des provinces de France*, p. 19 sq.; Béranger-Féraud, *Reminiscences populaires de la Provence*, pp. 135-141. As to the custom at Toulon, see Poncey, quoted by Brenil, *Mémoires*

de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie, viii. (1845), p. 190 note. The custom of drenching people on this occasion with water used to prevail in Toulon, Marseilles, and other towns in the south of France. The water was squirted from syringes, poured on the heads of passers-by from windows, and so on. See Brenil, *op. cit.* p. 237 sq.

the préfet and other authorities.¹ In Belgium people jump over the midsummer bonfires as a preventive of colic, and they keep the ashes at home to hinder fire from breaking out.²

The custom of lighting bonfires at midsummer has been observed in many parts of our own country. In the North of England these fires used to be lit in the open streets. Young and old gathered round them, and while the young leaped over the fires and engaged in games, their elders looked on and probably remembered with regret the days when they used to foot it as nimbly. Sometimes the fires were kindled on the tops of high hills. The people also carried firebrands about the fields.³ We are told that "on midsummer's eve, reckoned according to the old style, it was formerly the custom of the inhabitants, young and old, not only of Whalton, but of most of the adjacent villages, to collect a large cartload of whins and other combustible materials, which was dragged by them with great rejoicing (a fiddler being seated on the top of the cart) into the village and erected into a pile. The people from the surrounding country assembled towards evening, when it was set on fire; and while the young danced around it, the elders looked on smoking their pipes and drinking their beer until it was consumed." In a law-suit, which was tried in 1878, the rector of Whalton gave evidence of the constant use of the village green for the ceremony since 1843. "The bonfire," he said, "was lighted a little to the north-east of the well at Whalton, and partly on the footpath, and people danced round it and jumped through it. That was never interrupted." The Rev. G. R. Hall, writing in 1879, says that "the fire festivals or bonfires of the summer solstice at the Old Midsummer until recently were commemorated on Christenburg Crags and elsewhere by leaping through and dancing round the fires, as those who have been present have told me."⁴ In Herefordshire and Somersetshire the

¹ De Nore, *op. cit.* p. 20 sq.; Cortel, *op. cit.* pp. 218, 219 sq.

² E. Monseur, *Folklore Wallon*, p. 130, §§ 1783, 1786, 1787.

³ Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 300 sq., 318, cp. pp. 305, 306, 308 sq.; B.A. p. 512.

⁴ *The Denham Tracts*, edited by J. Hardy, ii. 342 sq., quoting *Archæologia Aethiana*, N.S., viii. 73, and the *Proceedings of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, vi. 242 sq. Whalton is a village of Northumberland, not far from Morpeth.

peasants used to make fires in the fields on Midsummer Eve "to bless the apples."¹ In Devonshire the custom of leaping over the midsummer fires was also observed.² In Cornwall bonfires were lit on Midsummer Eve and the people marched round them with burning torches, which they also carried from village to village. On Whiteborough, a large tumulus near Launceston, a huge bonfire used to be kindled on Midsummer Eve; a tall summer pole with a large bush at the top was fixed in the centre of the bonfire.³ The Cornish fires at this season appear to have been commonly lit on high and conspicuous hills, such as Tregonan, Godolphin, Carnwarth, and Cambrae. When it grew dusk on Midsummer Eve, old men would hobble away to some height whence they counted the fires and drew a presage from their number.⁴ At Darowen in Wales small bonfires were kindled on Midsummer Eve.⁵ On the same day people in the Isle of Man were wont to light fires to the windward of every field, so that the smoke might pass over the corn; and they folded their cattle and carried blazing furze or gorse round them several times.⁶

In Ireland, "on the Eves of St. John Baptist and St. Peter, they always have in every town a bonfire late in the evening, and carry about bundles of reeds fast tied and fired; these being dry, will last long, and flame better than a torch, and be a pleasing divertive prospect to the distant beholder; a stranger would go near to imagine the whole country was on fire."⁷ Another writer says of the South of Ireland: "On Midsummer's Eve, every eminence, near which is a habitation, blazes with bonfires; and round these they carry numerous torches, shouting and dancing."⁸ An author who described Ireland in the first quarter of the eighteenth century says: "On the vigil of St. John the Baptist's nativity,

¹ Aubrey, *Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, p. 96, cp. *id.*, p. 26.

² Brand, *op. cit.* i. 311.

³ *Id.*, i. 303, 318, 319: Dyer, *British Popular Customs*, p. 313.

⁴ J. Napier, *Folk-lore, or Superstitions Beliefs in the West of Scotland*, p. 173, quoting W. Botreuil's *Traditions*

and *Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall*.

⁵ Brand, *op. cit.* i. 318.

⁶ J. Train, *Account of the Isle of Man*, ii. 120.

⁷ Brand, i. 303, quoting Sir Henry Piers's *Description of Wyrsmeth*.

⁸ Brand, *l.c.*, quoting the author of the *Survey of the South of Ireland*.

they make bonfires, and run along the streets and fields with wisps of straw blazing on long poles to purify the air, which they think infectious by believing all the devils, spirits, ghosts, and hobgoblins fly abroad this night to hurt mankind."¹ Another writer states that he witnessed the festival in Ireland in 1782: "Exactly at midnight the fires began to appear, and taking advantage of going up to the leads of the house, which had a widely extended view, I saw on a radius of thirty miles, all around, the fires burning on every eminence which the country afforded. I had a further satisfaction in learning, from undoubted authority, that the people *danced round the fires*, and at the close went through these fires, and made their sons and daughters, together with their cattle, pass through the fire; and the whole was conducted with religious solemnity."² That the custom prevailed in full force as late as 1867 appears from a notice in a newspaper of that date, which runs thus: "The old pagan fire-worship still survives in Ireland, though nominally in honour of St. John. On Sunday night bonfires were observed throughout nearly every county in the province of Leinster. In Kilkenny fires blazed on every hillside at intervals of about a mile. There were very many in the Queen's County, also in Kildare and Wexford. The effect in the rich sunset appeared to travellers very grand. The people assemble and dance round the fires, the children jump through the flames, and in former times live coals were carried into the corn-fields to prevent blight."³ In County Leitrim on St. John's Eve, which is called Bonfire Day, fires are still lighted after dusk on the hills and along the sides of the roads.⁴ All over Kerry the same thing continues to be done, though not so commonly as of old. Small fires were made across the road, and to drive through them brought luck for the year. Cattle were also driven through the fires. On Lettermore Island, in South Connemara, some of the ashes from the midsummer bonfire are thrown on the fields to fertilise

¹ Brand, i. 305, quoting the author of the *Comical Pilgrim's Pilgrimage into Ireland*.

² Brand, i. 304, quoting *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1795, p. 124.

³ Dyer, *British Popular Customs*, p. 321 sq., quoting the *Liverpool Mercury* of June 29th, 1867.

⁴ L. L. Duncan, "Further Notes from County Leitrim," *Folk-lore*, v. (1894), p. 193.

them.¹ One writer informs us that in Munster and Connaught a bone must always be burned in the fire; for otherwise the people believe that the fire will bring no luck. He adds that in many places sterile beasts and human beings are passed through the fire, and that as a boy he himself jumped through the fire "for luck."²

Lady Wilde's account of the midsummer festival in Ireland is picturesque and probably correct in substance, although she does not cite her authorities. As it contains some interesting features which are not noticed by the other writers on Ireland whom I have consulted, I will quote the greater part of it in full. "In ancient times," she says, "the sacred fires were lighted with great ceremony on Midsummer Eve, and on that night all the people of the adjacent country kept watch on the western promontory of Howth, and the moment the first flash was seen from that spot the fact of ignition was announced with wild cries and cheers repeated from village to village, when all the local fires began to blaze, and Ireland was circled by a cordon of flame rising up from every hill. Then the dance and song began round every fire, and the wild hurrahs filled the air with the most frantic revelry. Many of these ancient customs are still continued, and the fires are still lighted on St. John's Eve on every hill in Ireland. When the fire has burned down to a red glow the young men strip to the waist and leap over or through the flames; this is done backwards and forwards several times, and he who braves the greatest blaze is considered the victor over the powers of evil, and is greeted with tremendous applause. When the fire burns still lower, the young girls leap the flame, and those who leap clean over three times back and forward will be certain of a speedy marriage and good luck in after-life, with many children. The married women then walk through the lines of the burning embers; and when the fire is nearly burnt and trampled down, the yearling cattle are driven through the hot ashes, and their back is singed with a lighted hazel twig. These rods are kept safely afterwards, being considered of

¹ A. C. Haddon, "A batch of Irish Folk-lore," *Folk-lore*, iv. (1893), pp. 351-359.

² G. H. Kinahan, "Notes on Irish Folk-lore," *Folk-lore Record*, iv. (1881), p. 97.

immense power to drive the cattle to and fro from the watering-places. As the fire diminishes the shouting grows fainter, and the song and the dance commence; while professional story-tellers narrate tales of fairy-land, or of the good old times long ago, when the kings and princes of Ireland dwelt amongst their own people, and there was food to eat and wine to drink for all comers to the feast at the king's house. When the crowd at length separate, every one carries home a brand from the fire, and great virtue is attached to the lighted *brone* which is safely carried to the house without breaking or falling to the ground. Many contests also arise amongst the young men; for whoever enters his house first with the sacred fire brings the good luck of the year with him."¹

In Scotland the traces of midsummer fires are few. We are told by a writer of the eighteenth century that "the midsummer-even fire, a relict of Druidism," was kindled in some parts of the county of Perth.² Another writer of the same period, describing what he calls the Druidical festivals of the Highlanders, says that "the least considerable of them is that of midsummer. In the Highlands of Perthshire there are some vestiges of it. The cowherd goes three times round the fold, according to the course of the sun, with a burning torch in his hand. They imagined this rite had a tendency to purify their herds and flocks, and to prevent diseases. At their return the landlady makes an entertainment for the cowherd and his associates."³ In the north-east of Scotland, down to the latter half of the eighteenth century, farmers used to go round their lands with burning torches about the middle of June.⁴ At the village of Tarbolton in Ayrshire a bonfire has been annually kindled from time immemorial on the evening of the first Monday after the eleventh of June. A noted cattle-market was formerly held at the fair on the following day. The bonfire

¹ Lady Wilde, *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*, ii. 214 sq.

² A. Johnstone, describing the parish of Monquhitter in Perthshire, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xxi. 143.

³ John Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by A. Allardyce, ii. 436.

⁴ Shaw, in Pennant's "Tour in Scotland," printed in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 136.

is still lit at the gloaming by the lads and lasses of the village on a high mound or hillock just outside of the village. Fuel for it is collected by the lads from door to door. The youth dance round the fire and leap over the fringes of it. The many cattle-drovers who used to assemble for the fair were wont to gather round the blazing pile, smoke their pipes, and listen to the young folk singing in chorus on the hillock. Afterwards they wrapped themselves in their plaids and slept round the bonfire, which was intended to last all night.¹ Moresin states that on St. Peter's Day, which is the twenty-ninth of June, the Scotch ran about with lighted torches on mountains and high grounds,² and towards the end of the eighteenth century the parish minister of Loudoun, a district of Ayrshire whose "bonny woods and braes" have been sung by Burns, wrote that "the custom still remains amongst the herds and young people to kindle fires in the high grounds, in honour of Beltan. *Beltan*, which in Gaelic signifies *Baal*, or *Bel's-fire*, was antiently the time of this solemnity. It is now kept on St. Peter's day."³

Far more important in Scotland, however, than the midsummer fires were the bonfires kindled on Allhallow Even or Hallowe'en, that is on the thirty-first of October, the day preceeding All Saints or Allhallows' Day. As these Hallowe'en bonfires belong to the class of celebrations with which we are here concerned, we may interrupt our examination of the midsummer festivals to notice them. Like the Beltane fires on the first of May, they seem to have prevailed most commonly in the Perthshire Highlands. On the evening of Hallowe'en "the young people of every hamlet assembled upon some eminence near the houses. There they made a bonfire of ferns or other fuel, cut the same day, which from the feast was called *Saulh-nag* or *Savnag*, a fire of rest

¹ From notes kindly furnished to me by the Rev. J. C. Higgins, parish minister of Tarbolton. Mr. Higgins adds that he knows of no superstition connected with the fire, and no tradition of its origin. I visited the scene of the bonfire in 1898, but, as Pausanias says (viii. 41. 6) in similar circumstances, "I did not happen to

arrive at the season of the festival." Indeed the snow was falling thick as I tramped to the village through the beautiful woods of "the Castle o' Montgomery" immortalised by Burns.

² Quoted by Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 512.

³ G. Lawrie, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, iii. 105.

and pleasure. Around it was placed a circle of stones, one for each person of the families to whom they belonged. And when it grew dark the bonfire was kindled, at which a loud shout was set up. Then each person taking a torch of ferns or sticks in his hand, ran round the fire exulting; and sometimes they went into the adjacent fields, where, if there was another company, they visited the bonfire, taunting the others if inferior in any respect to themselves. After the fire was burned out they returned home, where a feast was prepared, and the remainder of the evening was spent in mirth and diversions of various kinds. Next morning they repaired betimes to the bonfire, where the situation of the stones was examined with much attention. If any of them were misplaced, or if the print of a foot could be discerned near any particular stone, it was imagined that the person for whom it was set would not live out the year. Of late years this is less attended to, but about the beginning of the present century it was regarded as a sure prediction. The Hallowe'en fire is still kept up in some parts of the Low Country; but on the western coast and in the isles it is never kindled, though the night is spent in merriment and entertainments."¹ In the Perthshire parish of Callander, which includes the now famous pass of the Trossachs opening out on the winding and wooded shores of the lovely Loch Katrine, the Hallowe'en bonfires were still kindled down to near the end of the eighteenth century. When the fire had died down, the ashes were carefully collected in the form of a circle, and a stone was put in, near the circumference, for every person of the several families interested in the bonfire. Next morning, if any of these stones was found to be displaced or injured, the people made sure that the person represented by it was *fey* or devoted, and that he could not live twelve months from that day.² In the parish of Logierait, which covers the beautiful valley of the Tummel, one of the fairest regions of all Scotland, the Hallowe'en fire was somewhat different. Faggots of heath,

¹ John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by A. Aitardyce, li. 437 sq. This account was written in

the eighteenth century.

² J. Robertson, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xi. 621 sq.

broom, and the dressings of flax were kindled and carried on poles by men, who ran with them round the villages, attended by a crowd. As soon as one faggot was burnt out, a fresh one was lighted and fastened to the pole. Numbers of these blazing faggots were often carried about together, and when the night happened to be dark, they formed a splendid illumination.¹ Hallowe'en fires were also lighted in some parts of the north-east of Scotland. Villagers and farmers alike must have their fire. In the villages the boys went from house to house and begged a peat from each householder, generally with the words, "Ge's a peat t' burn the witches." When the peats and other fuel had been got together, they were piled in a heap and set on fire. Then each of the youths, one after another, laid himself down on the ground as near to the fire as he could without being burned, and thus lying allowed the smoke to roll over him. The others ran through the smoke and jumped over their prostrate comrade. When the fire had gone out, the ashes were scattered, the boys vying with each other who should scatter the most. After that they continued to run through them and to pelt each other with the charred peats. At each farm the spot chosen for the bonfire was as high as conveniently possible; and the proceedings at it were much the same as at the village bonfires. The lads of one farm, when their own fire was burnt out, sometimes went to a neighbouring fire and helped to kick the ashes about."

In the northern part of Wales, that other great Celtic region of Britain, it used also to be customary for every family to make a great bonfire called *Coel Coeth* on Hallowe'en. The fire was kindled on the most conspicuous spot near the house; and when it had nearly gone out every one threw into the ashes a white stone, which he had first marked. Then having said their prayers round the fire, they went to bed. Next morning, as soon as they were up, they came to

¹ A Stewart, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, v. 84 sq.

² W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 167 sq. A different interpretation is put upon this last custom by another writer, who, in describing the Hallowe'en customs of Buchan, says: "The hallow fire was

kindled, and guarded by the male part of the family. Societies were formed, either by pique or humour, to scatter certain fires, and the attack and defence were often conducted with art and with fury" (A. Johnstone, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xxi. 146).

stock, probably dates from a period before their dispersion, or at least from a time when alien races had not yet driven home the wedges of separation between them.¹

But it is time to return to the midsummer festival and to pass from the cloudy homes of the Celt to sunnier climes. All over Spain great bonfires called *lumes* are still lit on Midsummer Eve. They are kept up all night, and the children leap over them in a certain rhythmical way which is said to resemble the ancient dances. On the coast, people at this season plunge into the sea; in the inland districts the villagers go and roll naked in the dew of the meadows, which is supposed to be a sovereign preservative against diseases of the skin. On this evening, too, girls who would pry into the future put a vessel of water on the sill outside their window; and when the clocks strike twelve, they break an egg in the water and see, or fancy they see, in the shapes assumed by the pulp, as it blends with the liquid, the likeness of future bridegrooms, castles, coffins, and so forth. But generally, as might perhaps have been expected, the obliging egg exhibits the features of a bridegroom.² In Corsica on the Eve of St. John the people set fire to the trunk of a tree or to a whole trec, and the young men and maidens dance round the blaze, which is called *fucaraia*.³ We have seen that at Ozieri, in Sardinia, a great bonfire is kindled on St. John's Eve, and that the young people dance round it.⁴ Passing to Italy, we find that the midsummer fires are still lighted

¹ It is worth noting that in the French department of Deux-Sèvres young people used to assemble in the fields on All Saints' Day (the first of November) and kindle great fires of ferns, thorns, leaves, and stubble, at which they roasted chestnuts. They also danced round the fires and indulged in noisy pastimes. See Baron Dupin, in *Mémoires publiés par la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France*, iv. (1823), p. 108.

² Letter from Dr. Otero Acevado of Madrid, published in *Le Temps*, September 1898. An extract from the newspaper was sent me, but without mention of the day of the month when it appeared.

The fires on St. John's Eve in Spain are mentioned also by Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 317. Grimm inferred the custom from a passage in a romance (*Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ i. 518). To roll in the dew on the morning of St. John's Day is a cure for diseases of the skin in Normandy, Pénigord, and the Abruzzo, as well as in Spain (Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 8; De Nore, *Costumes, mythes et traditions des provinces de France*, p. 150; Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, p. 157).

³ Gubernatis, *Mythologie des Plantes*, i. 185.

⁴ Above, vol. ii. p. 127.

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³ Guilmartin, *Mythologie des Plantes*, i. 185.

⁴ Above, vol. ii. p. 127.

on St. John's Eve in many parts of the Abruzzo. They are commonest in the territory which was inhabited in antiquity by the Vestini; they are rarer in the land of the ancient Marsi, and they disappear entirely in the lower valley of the Sangro. For the most part, the fires are fed with straw and dry grass, and are kindled in the fields near the villages or on high ground. As they blaze up, the people dance round or over them. In leaping across the flames the boys cry out, "St. John, preserve my thighs and legs!" Formerly it used to be common to light the bonfires also in the towns in front of churches of St. John, and the remains of the sacred fire were carried home by the people; but this custom has mostly fallen into disuse. However, at Celano the practice is still kept up of taking brands and ashes from the bonfires to the houses, although the fires are no longer kindled in front of the churches, but merely in the streets.¹ At Orvieto the midsummer fires were specially excepted from the prohibition directed against bonfires in general.²

In Greece, the custom of kindling fires on St. John's Eve and jumping over them is said to be still universal. One reason assigned for it is a wish to escape from the fleas.³ According to another account, the women cry out, as they leap over the fire, "I leave my sins behind me."⁴ In Lesbos the fires are usually lighted by threes, and the people spring thrice over them, each with a stone on his head, saying, "I jump the hare's fire, my head a stone!"⁵ In Calymnos the midsummer fire is supposed to ensure abundance in the coming year as well as deliverance from fleas. The people dance round the fires singing, with stones on their heads, and then jump over the blaze or the glowing embers. When the fire is burning low, they throw the stones into it; and when it is nearly out, they make crosses on their legs and

¹ Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi* (Palermo, 1890), p. 154 sq. In the Abruzzo water also is supposed to require certain marvellous and beneficent properties on St. John's Night. Hence many people make a point of bathing in the sea or a river at that season, especially at the moment of sunrise. See Finamore, *op. cit.* pp. 158-160. We may compare the Provençal custom of bathing and splashing

water at midsummer (above, p. 287).

² Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,¹ i. 518.

³ W. R. Panton, in *Folk-lore*, ii. (1891), p. 128. The custom was reported to me when I was in Greece in 1890 (*Folk-lore*, i. (1890), p. 520).

⁴ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,¹ i. 519.

⁵ Georgenakis et Plineau, *Folk-lore de Lesbos*, p. 308.

then go straightway and bathe in the sea.¹ In Cos the lads and lasses dance round the bonfires on St. John's Eve. Each of the lads binds a black stone on his head, signifying that he wishes to become as strong as the stone. Also they make the sign of the cross on their feet and legs and jump over the fire.² On Midsummer Eve the Greeks of Macedonia light fires after supper in front of their gates. The garlands, now faded, which were hung over the doors on May Day, are taken down and cast into the flames, after which the young folk leap over the blaze, fully persuaded that St. John's fire will not burn them.³ Even the Mohammedans of Algeria and Morocco are reported to have kindled great midsummer bonfires of straw, into which they kept throwing incense and spices the whole night, invoking the divine blessing on their fruit-trees.⁴ From the Old World the midsummer fires have been carried across the Atlantic to America. In Brazil people jump over the fires of St. John, and at this season they can take hot coals in their mouths without burning themselves.⁵ In Bolivia on the Eve of St. John it is usual to see bonfires lighted on the hills and even in the streets of the capital La Paz. The writer who reports the custom adds that he cannot say whether it was introduced by the Spaniards, or was prevalent before the conquest.⁶

It remains to show that the burning of effigies of human beings in the midsummer fires was not uncommon. At Rottenburg in Wurtemberg, down to the beginning of the present century, a ceremony was observed on Midsummer Day which was called "beheading the angel-man." A stump was driven into the ground, wrapt with straw, and fashioned into the rude likeness of a human figure, with arms, head,

¹ W. K. Fenton, in *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895), p. 94. From the stones cast into the fire omens may perhaps be drawn, as in Scotland, Wales, and probably Brittany. See above, pp. 280, 294, 295 sq.

² W. H. D. Rouse, "Folklore from the Southern Sporades," *Folk-lore*, x. (1899), p. 179.

³ Lucy M. J. Garnett, *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-lore, the Christian Women*, p. 122.

⁴ G. Ferraro, *Superstizioni, usi e proverbi Abissirini*, p. 34 sq., referring to Alvise da Candamusta, *Relazioni dei viaggi d'Africa* in Ramusio.

⁵ K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Natur-Völkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 561.

⁶ D. Forbes, "On the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru," *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*, ii. (1870), p. 235.

and face. This was the angel-man; round about him wood was piled up. The boys, armed with swords, assembled in crowds, covered the figure completely over with flowers, and eagerly awaited the signal. When the pile of wood was fired and the angel-man burst into a blaze, the word was given and all the boys fell upon him with their swords and hewed the burning figure in pieces. Then they leaped backwards and forwards over the fire.¹ In some parts of the Tyrol a straw-man is carted about the village on Midsummer Day and then burned. He is called the *Lotter*, which has been corrupted into *Luther*.² In French Flanders down to 1789 a straw figure representing a man was always burned in the midsummer bonfire, and the figure of a woman was burned on St. Peter's Day, the twenty-ninth of June.³ At Grätz on the twenty-third of June the common people used to make a puppet called the *Tatermann*, which they dragged to the bleaching-ground, and pelted with burning besoms till it took fire.⁴ In some parts of Russia a figure of Kupalo is burned or thrown into a stream on St. John's Night.⁵ The Russian custom of carrying a straw effigy of Kupalo over the midsummer bonfire has been already described.⁶

The best general explanation of these European fire-festivals seems to be the one given by Mannhardt, namely, that they are sun-charms or magical ceremonies intended to ensure a proper supply of sunshine for men, animals, and plants. We have seen that savages resort to charms for making sunshine,⁷ and it is no wonder that primitive man in Europe has done the same. Indeed, when we consider the cold and cloudy climate of Europe during a great part of the year, we shall find it natural that sun-charms should have played a much more prominent part among the superstitious practices of European peoples than among those of savages who live nearer the equator. This view of the festivals is supported by various arguments drawn partly from the

¹ Birlinger, *Völkstümliches aus Schwaben*, ii. 100 sq.; *B.K.* p. 513 sq.

² Zingerle, *Sitten, etc., des Tiroler Volkes*,² p. 159, § 1353. cp. § 1355: *B.K.* p. 513.

³ Madame Clément, *Histoire des fêtes civiles et religieuses, etc., du Département du Nord* (Cambrai, 1836),

p. 364; Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 392; *B.K.* p. 513.

⁴ *B.K.* p. 513.

⁵ Kalston, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 240.

⁶ Above, vol. ii. p. 105.

⁷ Above, vol. i. p. 115 sqq.

rites themselves, partly from the influence which they are believed to exert upon the weather and on vegetation. For example, the custom of rolling a burning wheel down a hill-side, which is often observed at these times, seems a very natural imitation of the sun's course in the sky, and the imitation is especially appropriate on Midsummer Day when the sun's annual declension begins.¹ Not less graphic is the mimicry of his apparent revolution by swinging a burning tar-barrel round a pole.² The custom of throwing blazing discs, shaped like suns, into the air is probably also a piece of imitative magic. In these, as in so many cases, the magic force is supposed to take effect through mimicry or sympathy; by imitating the desired result you actually produce it; by counterfeiting the sun's progress through the heavens you really help the luminary to pursue his celestial journey with punctuality and despatch. The name "fire of heaven," by which the midsummer fire is sometimes popularly known,³ clearly indicates a consciousness of the connection between the earthly and the heavenly flame.

Again, the manner in which the fire appears to have been originally kindled on these occasions favours the view that it was intended to be a mock-sun. For, as various scholars have seen,⁴ it is highly probable that originally at these festivals fire was universally obtained by the friction of two pieces of wood. We have seen that this is still the case in some places both at the Easter and midsummer fires, and that it is expressly stated to have been formerly the case at the Beltane fires.⁵ But what makes it almost certain that this was once the invariable mode of kindling the fire at these periodic festivals is the analogy of the need-fires. Need-fires are kindled, not at fixed periods, but on occasions of special distress, particularly at the outbreak of a murrain,

¹ On the wheel as an emblem of the sun, see Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ ii. 585; H. Gaidoz, "Le dieu gaulois du soleil et le symbolisme de la roue," *Revue Archéologique*, iii. série, iv. (1884), p. 14 sqq. In the old Mexican picture-books the sun is often represented as a wheel of many colours (E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 521).

² Above, p. 272.

³ Birlinger, *Völkstümliches aus Schwaben*, ii. 57, 97; B.K. p. 510; cp. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 240.

⁴ Cp. Grimm, *D.M.* i. 521; Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 389; Ad. Kuhn, *Herabkunft des Feuers*,² pp. 41 sq., 47; W. Mannhardt, *B.K.* p. 521.

⁵ See above, pp. 258, 260 sq., 272, 275, 276.

and the cattle are driven through the need-fire, just as they are sometimes driven through the midsummer fires.¹ Now, the need-fire has almost always been produced by the friction of wood and sometimes by the revolution of a wheel; in Mull, for example, it was made by turning an oaken wheel over nine oaken spindles from east to west, that is, in the direction of the sun.² It is a plausible conjecture that the wheel employed to produce the need-fire represents the sun;³ and if the spring and midsummer fires were originally pro-

¹ On the need-fires, see Grimm, *D.M.* i. 501 sqq.; Wolf, *op. cit.* i. 116 sq., ii. 378 sqq.; Kuhn, *op. cit.* p. 41 sqq.; *B.A.* p. 518 sqq.; Kelly, *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore*, p. 48 sqq.; Elton, *Origins of English History*, p. 293 sq.; Jahn, *Die deutschen Opfergebräuche bei Ackerbau und Viehzucht*, p. 26 sqq.

² Grimm, *D.M.* i. 506. The fire was made on the top of Carnmoor Hill, every common fire in every house within sight of the hill having been previously extinguished. In 1767 a delay in the production of the need-fire was attributed to the obstinacy of one householder who would not let his fires be put out. The rule that all fires in the neighbourhood must be extinguished while the need-fire is being made is common to Scotland and Germany. See Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in Pinkerton's *Travels and Travels*, iii. 611; Grimm, *D.M.* i. 502, 503, 504, 507; Culshorn, *Sagen und Märchen* (Hanover, 1854), p. 234 sq.; Prühle, *Harzbilder* (Leipzig, 1855), p. 74 sq. In Prühle's account we read how in a village near Quedlinburg the kindling of the need-fire was impeded by a night-light burning in the parsonage; how the people knocked at the window and begged earnestly, but in vain, that the light might be extinguished; and how their hope of producing the need-fire revived towards morning when the night-light went out of itself. According to one account, in the Highlands of Scotland the rule that all common fires must be previously extinguished applied only to the houses situated between the two nearest

running streams (Kelly, *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore*, p. 53 sq.). In Bulgaria also every fire in the village must be extinguished before the need-fire is kindled; even smoking is forbidden. Two naked men produce the fire by rubbing dry branches together in the forest; and with the flame thus elicited they light two fires, one on each side of a cross-road haunted by wiles. The cattle are then driven between the two fires, from which glowing embers are afterwards taken to rekindle the cold hearths in the houses (A. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, p. 198). In Caithness the men who kindled the need-fire had previously to divest themselves of all metal (Jamieson, *Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, s.v. "Need-fire," vol. iii. p. 349 sq., ed. Longmuir and Donaldson). In some of the Hebrides the men who made the need-fire had to be eighty-one in number and all married; they worked at rubbing the two planks together by relays of nine men at a time (Martin, *loc. cit.*). Sometimes the fire is produced, not by the friction of two pieces of wood, but by the friction of a rope on wood. In the Halberstadt district the rope had to be pulled by two chaste boys (Grimm, *D.M.* i. 504). It is repertual, contrary to the usual custom, that near Wolfenbüttel the need-fire had to be struck by the smith from the cold anvil (K. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde*, p. 314). In England the need-fire is said to have been kindled at Birtley within the last half-century (*The Durham Tracts*, ii. 342; compare *ibid.* pp. 50, 365 sq.).

³ This is the view of Grimm, Wolf, Kuhn, Kelly, and Mannhardt.

duced in the same way, it would be a confirmation of the view that they were originally sun-charms. In point of fact there is, as Kuhn has pointed out,¹ some evidence to show that the midsummer fire was originally thus produced. We have seen that many Hungarian swincherds make fire on Midsummer Eve by rotating a wheel round a wooden axle wrapt in hemp, and that they drive their pigs through the fire thus made.² At Obermedlingen, in Swabia, the "fire of heaven," as it was called, was made on St. Vitus's Day (the fifteenth of June) by igniting a cart-wheel, which, smeared with pitch and plaited with straw, was fastened on a pole twelve feet high, the top of the pole being inserted in the nave of the wheel. This fire was made on the summit of the mountain, and as the flame ascended, the people uttered a set form of words, with eyes and arms directed heavenward.³ Here the fixing of a wheel on a pole and igniting it suggests that originally the fire was produced, as in the case of the need-fire, by the revolution of a wheel. The day on which the ceremony takes place (the fifteenth of June) is near midsummer; and we have seen that in Masuren fire is or used to be actually made on Midsummer Day by turning a wheel rapidly about an oaken pole, though it is not said that the new fire so produced is used to light a bonfire.

Once more, the influence which these bonfires are supposed to exert on the weather and on vegetation, goes to show that they are sun-charms, since the effects ascribed to them are identical with those of sunshine. Thus, we have seen that in the Vosges Mountains the people believe that the midsummer fires help to preserve the fruits of the earth and ensure good crops. In Sweden the warmth or cold of the coming season is inferred from the direction in which the flames of the May Day bonfire are blown; if they blow to the south, it will be warm, if to the north, cold. No doubt at present the direction of the flames is regarded merely as an augury of the weather, not as a mode of influencing it. But we may be pretty sure that this is one of the cases in which magic has dwindled into divination. So in the Eifel Mountains, when the smoke blows towards the corn-fields,

¹ *Herabkunft des Feuers*,² p. 47.

² See above, p. 277.

³ Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 240, § 443.

this is an omen that the harvest will be abundant. But doubtless the older view was, not merely that the smoke and flames prognosticated, but that they actually produced an abundant harvest, the heat of the flames acting like sunshine on the corn. Indeed, this older view must still have been held by people in the Isle of Man when they lit fires to windward of their fields in order that the smoke might blow over them. Notions of this sort are not confined to Europe. In South Africa, about the month of April, the Matabele light huge fires to the windward of their gardens, "their idea being that the smoke, by passing over the crops, will assist the ripening of them."¹ Among the Zulus also "medicine is burned on a fire placed to windward of the garden, the fumigation which the plants in consequence receive being held to improve the crop."² Again, the idea of our European peasants that the corn will grow well as far as the blaze of the bonfire is visible, is certainly a remnant of the belief in the quickening and fertilising power of the bonfires. The same belief reappears in the notion that embers taken from the bonfires and inserted in the fields will promote the growth of the crops, and again it plainly underlies the customs of sowing flax-seed in the direction in which the flames blow, of mixing the ashes of the bonfire with the seed-corn at sowing, and of scattering the ashes by themselves over the field. The belief that the flax will grow as high as the flames rise or the people leap over them belongs clearly to the same class of ideas. Once more, we saw that at Konz, on the banks of the Moselle, if the blazing wheel which was trundled down the hillside reached the river without being extinguished, this was hailed as a proof that the vintage would be abundant. So firmly was this belief held that the successful performance of the ceremony entitled the villagers to levy a tax upon the owners of the neighbouring vineyards. Here the unextinguished wheel meant an unclouded sun, and this again portended an abundant vintage. So the waggon-load of white wine which the villagers received from the vineyards round about was in fact a payment for the sunshine which they had procured for the grapes.

¹ L. Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 160 sq.

² J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal*, p. 18.

But in popular belief the quickening and fertilising influence of the bonfires is not limited to the vegetable world; it extends also to animals. This plainly appears both from the Irish custom of driving barren cattle through the midsummer fires, and from the German practice of mixing the ashes of the bonfires with the drink of cattle in order to make the animals thrive. Further, there are clear indications that even human fecundity is supposed to be promoted by the genial heat of the fires. It is an Irish belief that a girl who jumps thrice over the midsummer bonfire will soon marry and become the mother of many children; and in various parts of France they think that if a girl dances round nine fires she will be sure to marry within the year. On the other hand, in Lechain people say that if a young man and woman, leaping over the midsummer fire together, escape unsmirched, the young woman will not become a mother within twelve months—the flames have not touched and fertilised her. The rule observed in some parts of France and Belgium that the bonfires on the first Sunday in Lent should be kindled by the person who was last married seems to belong to the same class of ideas, whether it be that such a person is supposed to receive from, or to impart to, the fire a generative and fertilising influence. The common practice of lovers leaping over the fires hand in hand may very well have originated in a notion that thereby their marriage would be more likely to be blessed with offspring. And the scenes of profligacy which appear to have marked the midsummer celebration among the Esthonians, as they once marked the celebration of May Day among ourselves, may have sprung, not from the mere licence of holiday-makers, but from a crude notion that such orgies were justified, if not required, by some mysterious bond which linked the life of man to the courses of the heavens at this turning-point of the year.

The interpretation of these fire-customs as charms for making sunshine is confirmed by a parallel custom observed by the Hindoos of Southern India at the Pongol or Feast of Ingathering. The festival is celebrated in the early part of January, when, according to Hindoo astrologers, the sun enters the tropic of Capricorn, and the chief event of the festival coincides with the passage of the sun. For some

days previously the boys gather heaps of sticks, straw, dead leaves, and everything that will burn. On the morning of the first day of the festival the heaps are fired. Every street and lane has its bonfire. The young folk leap over the flames or pile on fresh fuel. This fire is an offering to Sûrya, the sun-god, or to Agni, the deity of fire; it "wakes him from his sleep, calling on him again to gladden the earth with his light and heat."¹ To say that the fires awaken the sun-god from his sleep is only a metaphorical and perhaps modernised expression of the belief that they actually help to rekindle the sun's light and heat.

A festival of Northern India which presents points of resemblance to the popular European celebrations which we have been considering is the Holi. This is a village festival held in early spring at the full moon of the month Phalgun. Large bonfires are lit and young people dance round them. The people believe that the fires prevent blight, and that the ashes cure disease. At Barsana the local village priest is expected to pass through the Holi bonfire, which, in the opinion of the faithful, cannot burn him. Indeed he holds his land rent-free simply on the score of his being fire-proof. On one occasion when the priest disappointed the expectant crowd by merely jumping over the outermost verge of the smouldering ashes and then bolting into his cell, they threatened to deprive him of his benefice if he did not discharge his spiritual functions better when the next Holi season came round. Another feature of the festival which has, or once had, its counterpart in the corresponding European ceremonies is the unchecked profligacy which prevails among the Hindoos at this time.² In Kumaon, a district of North-West India, at the foot of the Himalayas, each clan celebrates the Holi festival by cutting down a tree, which is thereupon stripped of its leaves, decked with shreds of cloth, and burnt at some convenient place in the quarter of the town inhabited by the clan. Some of the songs sung on this occasion are of a ribald character. The people leap

¹ Ch. E. Gover, "The Pongol festival in Southern India," *Journals of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., v. (1879), p. 96 sq.

² W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, pp. 387-393.

over the ashes of the fire, believing that they thus rid themselves of itch and other diseases of the skin. While the trees are burning, each clan tries to carry off strips of cloth from the tree of another clan, and success in the attempt is thought to ensure good luck. In Gwalior large heaps of cow-dung are burnt instead of trees. Among the Marwaris the festival is celebrated by the women with obscene songs and gestures. A monstrous and disgusting image of a certain Nathuram, who is said to have been a notorious profligate, is set up in a bazaar and then smashed with blows of shoes and bludgeons while the bonfire of cow-dung is blazing. No household can be without an image of Nathuram, and on the night when the bride first visits her husband, the image of this disreputable personage is placed beside her couch. Barren women and mothers whose children have died look to Nathuram for deliverance from their troubles.¹

In the Chinese province of Fo-Kien we also meet with a vernal festival of fire which may be compared to the fire-festivals of Europe. The ceremony, according to an eminent authority, is a solar festival in honour of the renewal of vegetation and of the vernal warmth. It falls in April, on the thirteenth day of the third month in the Chinese calendar, and is doubtless connected with the ancient custom of renewing the fire, which, as we saw, used to be observed in China at this season.² The chief performers in the ceremony are labourers, who refrain from women for seven days, and fast for three days before the festival. During these days they are taught in the temple how to discharge the difficult and dangerous duty which is to be laid upon them. On the eve of the festival an enormous brazier of charcoal, sometimes twenty feet wide, is prepared in front of the temple of the Great God, the protector of life. At sunrise next morning the brazier is lighted and kept burning by fresh supplies of fuel. A Taoist priest throws a mixture of salt and rice on the fire to conjure the flames and ensure an abundant year. Further, two exorcists, barefooted and followed by two peasants, traverse the fire again and again till it is somewhat beaten down. Meantime the pro-

¹ Pandit Janardan Joshi, in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, iii. p. 92 sq., § 199.

² See above, p. 251 sq.

cession is forming in the temple. The image of the god of the temple is placed in a sedan-chair, resplendent with red paint and gilding, and is carried forth by a score or more of barefooted peasants. On the shafts of the sedan-chair, behind the image, stands a magician with a dagger stuck through the upper parts of his arms and grasping in each hand a great sword, with which he essays to deal himself violent blows on the back; however the strokes as they descend are mostly parried by peasants, who walk behind him and interpose bamboo rods between his back and the swords. Wild music now strikes up, and under the excitement caused by its stirring strains, the procession passes thrice across the furnace. At their third passage the performers are followed by other peasants carrying the utensils of the temple; and the rustic mob, electrified by the frenzied spectacle, falls in behind. Strange as it may seem, burns are comparatively rare. Inured from infancy to walking barefoot, the peasants can step with impunity over the glowing charcoal, provided they plant their feet squarely and do not stumble; for usage has so hardened their soles that the skin is converted into a sort of leathery or horny substance which is almost callous to heat. But sometimes, when they slip and a hot coal touches the sides of their feet or ankles, they may be seen to pull a wry face and jump out of the furnace amid the laughter of the spectators. When this part of the ceremony is over, the procession defiles round the village, and the priests distribute to every family a leaf of yellow paper inscribed with a magic character, which is thereupon glued over the door of the house. The peasants carry off the charred embers from the furnace, pound them to ashes, and mix the ashes with the fodder of their cattle, believing that it fattens them. However, the Chinese Government disapproves of these performances, and next morning a number of the performers may generally be seen in the hands of the police, laid face downwards on the ground and receiving a sound castigation on a part of their person which is probably more sensitive than the soles of their feet.¹

¹ G. Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise* (The Hague and Leyden, 1875), p. 143 sq.; *id.*, "La fête de fouler le feu

célébrée en Chine et par les Chinois à Java," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ix. (1896), pp. 193-195.

In this last festival the essential feature of the ceremony appears to be the passage of the image of the deity across the fire; it may be compared to the passage of the straw effigy of Kupalo across the midsummer bonfire in Russia. As we shall see presently, such customs are probably magical rites designed to produce light and warmth by subjecting the deity himself to the heat and glow of the furnace. Meantime we may conjecture that where, as at Barsana, priests or sorcerers have been accustomed in the discharge of their functions to walk through or over fire, they have sometimes done so as the living representatives or embodiments of deities, spirits, or other supernatural beings. Some confirmation of this view is furnished by the beliefs and practices of the Dosadhs, a low Indian caste in Behar and Chota Nagpur. On the fifth, tenth, and full-moon days of three months in the year, the priest walks over a narrow trench filled with smouldering wood ashes, and is supposed thus to be inspired by the tribal god Rahu, who becomes incarnate in him for a time. Full of the spirit and also, it is surmised, of drink, the man of god then mounts a bamboo platform, where he sings hymns and distributes to the crowd leaves of *tulsi*, which cure incurable diseases, and flowers which cause barren women to become happy mothers. The service winds up with a feast lasting far into the night, at which the line that divides religious fervour from drunken revelry cannot always be drawn with absolute precision.¹ Similarly the Bhuiyas, a Dravidian tribe of Mirzapur, worship their tribal hero Bir by walking over a short trench filled with fire, and they say that the man who is possessed by the hero does not feel any pain in the soles of his feet.² Ceremonies of this sort used to be observed in most districts of the Madras Presidency, sometimes in discharge of vows made in time of

According to Mr. Schlegel, the connection between this festival and the old custom of solemnly extinguishing and relighting the fire in spring is unquestionable.

¹ H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Ethnographic Glossary*, i. 255 sq. Compare W. Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 10: *id.*, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western*

Provinces and Oudh, ii. 355. According to Mr. Risley, the trench filled with smouldering ashes is so narrow (only a span and a quarter wide) "that very little dexterity would enable a man to walk with his feet on either edge, so as not to touch the smouldering ashes at the bottom."

² W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, ii. 82.

sickness or distress, sometimes periodically in honour of a deity. Where the ceremony was observed periodically, it generally occurred in March or June, which are the months of the vernal equinox and the summer solstice respectively. A narrow trench, sometimes twenty yards long and half a foot deep, was filled with small sticks and twigs, mostly of tamarind, which were kindled and kept burning till they sank into a mass of glowing embers. Along this the devotees, often fifty or sixty in succession, walked, ran, or leaped barefoot. In 1854 the Madras Government instituted an inquiry into the custom, but found that it was not attended by danger or instances of injury sufficient to call for governmental interference.¹ The French traveller Sonnerat has described how, in the eighteenth century, the Hindoos celebrated a fire-festival of this sort in honour of the god Darma Rajah and his wife Drobedé. The festival lasted eighteen days, during which all who had vowed to take part in it were bound to fast, to practise continence, to sleep on the ground without a mat, and to walk on a furnace. On the eighteenth day the images of Darma Rajah and his spouse were carried in procession to the furnace, and the performers followed dancing, their heads crowned with flowers and their bodies smeared with saffron. The furnace consisted of a trench about forty feet long, filled with hot embers. When the images had been carried thrice round it, the worshippers

¹ M. J. Walhouse, "Passing through the Fire," *Indian Antiquary*, vii. (1878), p. 126 sq. At Akka timanully, one of the many villages which help to make up the town of Bangalore in Southern India, one woman at least from every house is expected to walk through the fire at the village festival. Captain J. S. F. Mackenzie witnessed the ceremony in 1873. A trench, four feet long by two feet wide, was filled with live embers. The priest walked through it thrice, and the women afterwards passed through it in batches. Capt. Mackenzie remarks: "From the description one reads of walking through fire, I expected something sensational. Nothing could be more tame than the ceremony we saw performed; in which there never was nor ever could be the

slightest danger to life. Some young girl, whose soles were tender, might next morning find that she had a blister, but this would be the extent of harm she could receive." See *Indian Antiquary*, iii. (1874), pp. 6-8. But to fall on the hot embers might result in injuries which would prove fatal, and such an accident is known to have occurred at a village in Bengal (H. J. Stokes, "Walking through Fire," *Indian Antiquary*, ii. (1873), p. 190 sq.). Accounts of similar rites practised in Fiji, Tonga, and other parts of the world have been cited by Mr. Andrew Lang (*Modern Mythology*, p. 154 sq.; *Athenaeum*, 26th August and 14th October 1899), but these accounts shed little light on the origin and meaning of the custom.

walked over the embers, faster or slower, according to the degree of their religious fervour, some carrying their children in their arms, others brandishing spears, swords, and standards. This part of the ceremony being over, the bystanders hastened to rub their foreheads with ashes from the furnace, and to beg from the performers the flowers which they had worn in their hair; and such as obtained them preserved the flowers carefully. The rite was performed in honour of the goddess Drobedé. For she married five brothers all at once; every year she left one of her husbands to betake herself to another, but before doing so she had to purify herself by fire. There was no fixed date for the celebration of the rite, but it could only be held in one of the first three months of the year.¹

Similar rites were performed in antiquity at Castabala in Cappadocia by the priestesses of an Asiatic goddess, whom the Greeks called Artemis-Perasia;² and at the foot of Mount Soracte, in Italy, there was a sanctuary of a goddess Feronia, where once a year the men of certain families walked barefoot, but unscathed, over the glowing embers and ashes of a great fire of pinewood in presence of a vast multitude, who had assembled from all the country round about to pay their devotions to the deity or to ply their business at the fair. The families from whom these latter performers were drawn went by the name of Hirpi Sorani, or "Soranian Wolves"; and in consideration of the services which they rendered the state by walking through the fire, they were exempted, by a special decree of the senate, from military service and all public burdens. In the discharge of their sacred function, if we can trust the testimony of Strabo, they were believed to be inspired by the goddess Feronia. The ceremony certainly took place in her sanctuary, which was held in the highest reverence alike by Latins and Sabines; but according to Virgil and Pliny the rite was performed in honour of the god of the mountain, whom they call by the Greek name of Apollo, but whose real name appears

¹ Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes orientales et à la Chine* (Paris, 1782), i. 247 sq.

² Strabo, xii. 2. 7: ἐν τοῖς Κασταβάλοις ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς Περασίας Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερὸν, ὅπου φασὶ τὰς ἱερέας γυμνοῖς τοῖς ποσὶ δι' ἀνθρακίας βαδίζειν ἀπαθείς.

to have been Soranus.¹ If Soranus was a sun-god, as his name appears to indicate,² we might perhaps conclude that the passage of his priests through the fire was a magical ceremony designed to procure a due supply of light and warmth for the earth by mimicking the sun's passage across the firmament. For so priceless a service, rendered at some personal risk, it would be natural that the magicians should be handsomely rewarded by a grateful country, and that they should be released from the common obligations of earth in order the better to devote themselves to their celestial mission. The neighbouring towns paid the first-fruits of their harvest as tribute to the shrine, and loaded it besides with offerings of gold and silver, of which, however, it was swept clean by Hannibal when he hung with his dusky army, like a storm-cloud about to break, within sight of the sentinels on the walls of Rome.³

The custom of leaping over the fire and driving cattle through it may be intended, on the one hand, to secure for man and beast a share of the vital energy of the sun, and, on the other hand, to purge them of all evil influences; for to the primitive mind fire is the most powerful of all purificatory agents. The latter idea is obviously uppermost in the minds of Greek women when they leap over the mid-summer fire saying, "I leave my sins behind me." So in

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 19; Virgil, *Aen.* xi. 784 *sqq.*, with the comment of Servius; Strabo, v. 2. 9; Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* iii. 32. From a reference to the custom in Silius Italicus (v. 175 *sqq.*) it seems that the men passed thrice through the furnace holding the entrails of the sacrificial victims in their hands. The learned but sceptical Varro attributed their immunity in the fire to a drug with which they took care to anoint the soles of their feet before they planted them in the furnace. See Varro, cited by Servius, on Virgil, *Aen.* xi. 787. The whole subject has been treated by Mannhardt (*Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 327 *sqq.*) and Mr. Andrew Lang (*Modern Mythology*, p. 148 *sqq.*). Mannhardt compares the rites of these "Soranian

Wolves" with the ceremonies performed by the brotherhood of the Green Wolf at Jumièges in Normandy. See above, p. 281 *sqq.*

² L. Preller (*Römische Mythologie*,³ i. 268), following G. Curtius, would connect the first syllable of Soranus and Soracte with the Latin *sol*, "sun." W. Ridgeway points out to me that as *r* in *Hirpi* ("wolves") answers to *l* in *lupi*, so *r* in *Sorani* probably answers to *l* in *sol*. Thus the Hirpi Sorani would be "the solar wolves."

³ Livy, xxvi. 11. About this time the Carthaginian army encamped only three miles from Rome and Hannibal in person, at the head of two thousand cavalry, rode close up to the walls and leisurely reconnoitred them. See Livy xxvi. 10.

Yucatan at a New Year's festival the people used to light a huge bonfire and pass through it, in the belief that this was a means of ridding themselves of their troubles.¹ The custom of driving cattle through a fire is not confined to Europe. At certain times the Hottentots make a fire of chips, dry branches, and green twigs, so as to raise a great smoke. Through this fire they drive their sheep, dragging them through by force, if necessary. If the sheep make their escape without passing through the fire, it is reckoned a heavy disgrace and a very bad omen. But if they pass readily through or over the fire, the joy of the Hottentots is indescribable.²

The procession or race with burning torches, which so often forms a part of these fire-festivals, appears to be simply a means of diffusing far and wide the genial influence of the bonfire or of the sunshine which it represents. Hence on these occasions lighted torches are very frequently carried over the fields, sometimes with the avowed intention of fertilising them;³ and for the same purpose live coals from the bonfire are sometimes placed in the field "to prevent blight." On the eve of Twelfth Day in Normandy men, women, and children run wildly through the fields and orchards with lighted torches, which they wave about the branches and dash against the trunks of the fruit-trees for the sake of burning the moss and driving away the moles and field mice. "They believe that the ceremony fulfils the double object of exorcising vermin whose multiplication would be a real calamity, and of imparting fecundity to the trees, the fields, and even the cattle"; and they imagine that the more the ceremony is prolonged, the greater will be the crop of fruit next autumn.⁴ In Bohemia they say that the corn will grow as high as they fling the blazing besoms into the air.⁵ Nor are such notions confined to Europe. In

¹ Diego de Landa, *Relacion des cosas de Yucatan* (Paris, 1864), p. 233.

² Kollien, *Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, i. 129 sqq.

³ P. 255. The torches of Demeter, which figure so largely in her myth and on the monuments, are perhaps to be explained by this custom. To regard, with Mannhardt (*A.A.* p. 536), the

torches in the modern European customs as imitations of lightning seems unnecessary.

⁴ A. Bosquet, *La Normandie romanesque et merveilleuse*, p. 295 sq.; Leconte, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 126, 129.

⁵ Dr. Jelinek, "Materialien zur Vorgeschichte und Volkskunde Böh-

Corca, a few days before the New Year festival, the cunuchs of the palace swing burning torches, chanting invocations the while, and this is supposed to ensure bountiful crops for the next season.¹ The custom of trundling a burning wheel over the fields, which used to be practised in Poitou for the express purpose of fertilising them, embodies the same idea in a still more graphic form; since in this way the mock-sun itself, not merely its light and heat represented by torches, is made actually to pass over the ground which is to receive its quickening and kindly influence. Again, the custom of carrying lighted brands round the cattle is plainly equivalent to driving the animals through the fire. It is quite possible that in these customs the idea of the quickening power of fire may be combined with the conception of it as a purgative agent for the expulsion or destruction of evil beings, such as witches and the vermin that destroy the fruits of the earth. Certainly the fires are often interpreted in the latter way by the persons who light them; and this purgative use of the element comes out very prominently, as we have seen, in the general expulsion of demons from towns and villages. But in the present class of cases this aspect of fire may be secondary, if indeed it is more than a later misinterpretation of the custom.

It remains to ask, What is the meaning of burning an effigy in these bonfires? The effigies so burned, as I have already remarked, can hardly be separated from the effigies of Death which are burned or otherwise destroyed in spring; and grounds have been already given for regarding the so-called effigies of Death as really representatives of the tree-spirit or spirit of vegetation. Are the other effigies, which are burned in the spring and midsummer bonfires, susceptible of the same explanation? It would seem so. For just as the fragments of the so-called Death are stuck in the fields to make the crops grow, so the charred embers of the figure burned in the spring bonfires are sometimes laid on the fields in the belief that they will keep vermin from the crop. Again, the rule that the last married bride must leap over

mens," *Mittheilungen der anthropolog. Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxi. (1891), p. 13 note.

¹ Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, ii. 56 sq.

the fire in which the straw-man is burned on Shrove Tuesday, is probably intended to make her fruitful.¹ But, as we have seen, the power of blessing women with offspring is a special attribute of tree-spirits;² it is therefore a fair presumption that the burning effigy over which the bride must leap is a representative of the fertilising tree-spirit or spirit of vegetation. This character of the effigy, as representative of the spirit of vegetation, is almost unmistakable when the figure is composed of an unthreshed sheaf of corn or is covered from head to foot with flowers.³ Again, it is to be noted that, instead of a puppet, trees, either living or felled, are sometimes burned both in the spring and midsummer bonfires.⁴ Now, considering the frequency with which the tree-spirit is represented in human shape, it is hardly rash to suppose that when sometimes a tree and sometimes an effigy is burned in these fires, the effigy and the tree are regarded as equivalent to each other, each being a representative of the tree-spirit. This, again, is confirmed by observing, first, that sometimes the effigy which is to be burned is carried about simultaneously with a May-tree, the former being carried by the boys, the latter by the girls;⁵ and, second, that the effigy is sometimes tied to a living tree and burned with it.⁶ In these cases, we can scarcely doubt, the tree-spirit is represented, as we have found it represented before, in duplicate, both by the tree and by the effigy. That the true character of the effigy as a representative of the beneficent spirit of vegetation should sometimes be forgotten, is natural. The custom of burning a beneficent god is too foreign to later modes of thought to escape misinterpretation. Naturally enough the people who continued to burn his image came in time to identify it as the effigy of persons, whom, on various grounds, they regarded with aversion, such as Judas Iscariot, Luther, and a witch.

The general reasons for killing a god or his representative have been examined in the preceding chapter. But when the god happens to be a deity of vegetation, there are special reasons why he should die by fire. For

¹ See above, p. 244 *sq.*

² Above, vol. i. p. 192 *sqq.*

³ Pp. 245, 300.

⁴ Pp. 242, 255, 256, 273, 279, 281, 285, 286, 297.

⁵ P. 245.

⁶ P. 242.

light and heat are necessary to vegetable growth ; and, on the principle of sympathetic magic, by subjecting the personal representative of vegetation to their influence, you secure a supply of these necessities for trees and crops. In other words, by burning the spirit of vegetation in a fire which represents the sun, you make sure that, for a time at least, vegetation shall have plenty of sun. It may be objected that, if the intention is simply to secure enough sunshine for vegetation, this end would be better attained, on the principles of sympathetic magic, by merely passing the representative of vegetation through the fire instead of burning him. In point of fact this is sometimes done. In Russia, as we have seen, the straw figure of Kupalo is not burned in the midsummer fire, but merely carried backwards and forwards across it.¹ But, for the reasons already given, it is necessary that the god should die ; so next day Kupalo is stripped of her ornaments and thrown into a stream. In this Russian custom, therefore, the passage of the image through the fire is a *sun-charm* pure and simple ; the killing of the god is a separate act, and the mode of killing him—by drowning—is probably a *rain-charm*. But usually people have not thought it necessary to draw this fine distinction ; for the various reasons already assigned, it is advantageous, they think, to expose the god of vegetation to a considerable degree of heat, and it is also advantageous to kill him, and they combine these advantages in a rough-and-ready way by burning him.

Finally, we have to ask, Were human beings formerly burned as representatives of the tree-spirit or deity of vegetation ? We have seen reasons for believing that living persons have often acted as representatives of the tree-spirit, and have suffered death as such. There is no reason, therefore, why they should not have been burned, if any special advantages were likely to be attained by putting them to death in that way. The consideration of human suffering is not one which enters into the calculations of primitive man. It would have been surprising if it did, when we remember the record of Christian Europe. Now, in the fire-festivals which we are discussing, the pretence of burning people is

¹ Vol. ii. p. 105.

sometimes carried so far that it seems reasonable to regard it as a mitigated survival of an older custom of actually burning them. Thus in Aachen, as we saw, the man clad in peas-straw acts so cleverly that the children really believe he is being burned. At Jumièges in Normandy the man clad all in green, who bore the title of the Green Wolf, was pursued by his comrades, and when they caught him they feigned to fling him upon the midsummer bonfire. Similarly at the Beltane fires the pretended victim was seized, and a show made of throwing him into the flames, and for some time afterwards people affected to speak of him as dead. The titular king at Aix, who reigned for a year and danced the first dance round the midsummer bonfire, may perhaps in days of old have discharged the less agreeable duty of serving as fuel for that fire which in later times he only kindled. In the following customs Mannhardt is probably right in recognising traces of an old custom of burning a leaf-clad representative of the spirit of vegetation. At Wolfseck, in Austria, on Midsummer Day, a boy completely clad in green fir branches goes from house to house, accompanied by a noisy crew, collecting wood for the bonfire. As he gets the wood he sings—

"Forest trees I want,
No sour milk for me,
But beer and wine,
So can the wood-man be jolly and gay."¹

In some parts of Bavaria, also, the boys who go from house to house collecting fuel for the midsummer bonfire envelop one of their number from head to foot in green branches of firs, and lead him by a rope through the whole village.² At Moosheim, in Wurtemberg, the festival of St. John's Fire usually lasted for fourteen days, ending on the second Sunday after Midsummer Day. On this last day the bonfire was left in charge of the children, while the older people retired to a wood. Here they encased a young fellow in leaves and twigs, who, thus disguised, went to the fire,

¹ *B.K.* p. 524.

² *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iii. 956; *B.K.* p. 524. In the neighbourhood of

Breitenbrunn the lad who collects fuel at this season has his face blackened and is called "the Charcoal Man" (*Bavaria, etc.*, ii. 261).

scattered it, and trod it out. All the people present fled at the sight of him.¹

In this connection it is worth while to note that in pagan Europe the water as well as the fire seems to have claimed its human victim on Midsummer Day. Some German rivers, such as the Saale and the Spree, are believed still to require their victim on that day; hence people are careful not to bathe at this perilous season. Where the beautiful Neckar flows, between vine-clad and wooded hills, under the castled steep of Heidelberg, the spirit of the river seeks to drown three persons, one on Midsummer Eve, one on Midsummer Day, and one on the day after. On these nights, if you hear a shriek as of a drowning man or woman from the water, beware of running to the rescue; for it is only the water-fairy shrieking to lure you to your doom. Many a fisherman of the Elbe knows better than to launch his boat and trust himself to the treacherous river on Midsummer Day. And Samland fishermen will not go to sea at this season, because they know that the sea is then hollow and demands a victim. In the neighbourhood of the Lake of Constance the Swabian peasants say that on St. John's Day the Angel or St. John must have a swimmer and a climber; hence no one will climb a tree or bathe even in a brook on that day.² According to others, St. John will have three dead men on his day; one of them must die by water, one by a fall, and one by lightning; therefore old-fashioned people warn their children not to climb or bathe, and are very careful themselves not to run into any kind of danger on Midsummer Day.³ Accordingly when we find that, in one of the districts where a belief of this sort prevails, it used to be customary to throw a person into the water on Midsummer Day, we can hardly help concluding that this was only a modification of an older custom of actually drowning a human being in the river at that time. In Voigtland it was formerly the practice

¹ Birlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, ii. 121 sq., § 146; B.K. p. 524 sq.

² E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 428 sq., §§ 120, 122; J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch, etc., im Voigtlande*, p. 176;

Tietzen und Temme, *Die Volkssagen Ost-preussens, Litthanens und West-preussens*, p. 277 sq.; K. Haupt, *Sagenbuch der Lausitz*, i. 48.

³ Monianus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste, Volksbräuche und deutscher Volksglaube*, p. 34.

to set up a fine May tree, adorned with all kinds of things, on St. John's Day. The people danced round it, and when the lads had fetched down the things with which it was tricked out, the tree was thrown into the water. But before this was done, they sought out somebody whom they treated in the same manner, and the victim of this horseplay was called "the John." The brawls and disorders, which such a custom naturally provoked, led to the suppression of the whole ceremony.¹

But it seems possible to go farther than this. Of human sacrifices offered on these occasions the most unequivocal traces, as we have seen, are those which, about a hundred years ago, still lingered at the Beltane fires in the Highlands of Scotland, that is, among a Celtic people who, situated in a remote corner of Europe, enjoying practical independence, and almost completely isolated from foreign influence, had till then conserved their old heathenism better than any other people in the West of Europe.² It is significant, therefore, that human sacrifices by fire are known, on unquestionable evidence, to have been systematically practised by the Celts. The earliest description of these sacrifices has been bequeathed to us by Julius Caesar. As conqueror of the hitherto independent Celts of Gaul, Caesar had ample opportunity of observing the national Celtic religion and manners, while these were still fresh and crisp from the native mint and had not yet been fused in the melting-pot of Roman civilisation. With his own notes Caesar appears to have incorporated the observations of a Greek explorer, by name Posidonius, who travelled in Gaul about fifty years before Caesar carried the Roman arms to the English Channel. The Greek geographer Strabo and the historian Diodorus seem also to have derived their descriptions of the Celtic sacrifices from the work of Posidonius, but independently of each other and of Caesar, for each of the three derivative accounts contains some details which are not to be found in either of the others. By combining them, therefore, we can restore the original account of Posidonius with some certainty, and thus obtain a picture of the sacrifices offered by the Celts of Gaul at the close of the

¹ Köhler, *loc. cit.*

second century B.C.¹ The following seem to have been the main outlines of the custom. Condemned criminals were reserved by the Celts in order to be sacrificed to the gods at a great festival which took place once in every five years. The more there were of such victims, the greater was believed to be the fertility of the land.² If there were not enough criminals to furnish victims, captives taken in war were immolated to supply the deficiency. When the time came the victims were sacrificed by the Druids or priests. Some they shot down with arrows, some they impaled, and some they burned alive in the following manner. Colossal images of wicker-work or of wood and grass were constructed; these were filled with live men, cattle, and animals of other kinds; fire was then applied to the images, and they were burned with their living contents.

Such were the great festivals held once every five years. But besides these quinquennial festivals, celebrated on so grand a scale and with, apparently, so large an expenditure of human life, it seems reasonable to suppose that festivals of the same sort, only on a lesser scale, were held annually, and that from these annual festivals are lineally descended some at least of the fire-festivals which, with their traces of human sacrifices, are still celebrated year by year in many parts of Europe. The gigantic images constructed of osiers or covered with grass in which the Druids enclosed their victims remind us of the leafy framework in which the human representative of the tree-spirit is still so often encased.³ Considering, therefore, that the fertility of the land was apparently supposed to depend upon the due performance of these sacrifices, Mannhardt is probably right in viewing the Celtic victims, cased in osiers and grass, as representatives of the tree-spirit or spirit of vegetation. These wicker giants of the Druids seem to have had till lately their representatives at the spring and midsummer festivals of modern Europe. At Douay, down to the early part of the nineteenth century, a procession took place annually on the Sunday

¹ Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* vi. 15; Strabo, iv. 4. 5; Diodorus, v. 32. See Mannhardt, *B.K.* p. 525 sqq.

² Strabo, iv. 4. 4: τὰς δὲ φονικὰς θίκας μάλιστα τούτοις [*i.e.* the Druids]

ἐπετέτραπτο δικάζειν, ὅταν τε φορὰ τούτων ᾖ, φορὰν καὶ τῆς χώρας νομίζουσιν ὑπάρχειν. On this passage see Mannhardt, *B.K.* p. 529 sqq.

³ See vol. i. p. 209 sqq.

nearest to the seventh of July. The great feature of the procession was a colossal figure, some twenty or thirty feet high, made of osiers, and called "the giant," which was moved through the streets by means of rollers and ropes worked by men who were enclosed within the effigy. The wooden head of the giant is said to have been carved and painted by Rubens. The figure was armed as a knight with lance and sword, helmet and shield. Behind him marched his wife and his three children, all constructed of osiers on the same principle, but on a smaller scale.¹ At Dunkirk the procession of the giants took place on Midsummer Day, the twenty-fourth of June. The festival, which was known as the Follies of Dunkirk, attracted such multitudes of spectators, that the inns and private houses could not lodge them all, and many had to sleep in cellars or in the streets. In 1755 an eye-witness estimated that the number of onlookers was not less than forty thousand, without counting the inhabitants of the town. The streets through which the procession took its way were lined with double ranks of soldiers, and the houses crammed with spectators from top to bottom. High mass was celebrated in the principal church and then the procession got under weigh. First came the guilds or brotherhoods, the members walking two and two with great waxen tapers, lighted, in their hands. They were followed by the friars and the secular priests, and then came the Abbot, magnificently attired, with the Host borne before him by a venerable old man. When these were past, the real "Follies of Dunkirk" began. They consisted of pageants of various sorts wheeled through the streets in cars. These appear to have varied somewhat from year to year; but if we may judge from the processions of 1755 and 1757, both of which have been described by eye-witnesses, a standing show was a car decked with foliage and branches to imitate a wood, and carrying a number of men dressed in

¹ Madame Clément, *Histoire des fêtes civiles et religieuses du département du Nord* (Cambrai, 1836), pp. 193-200; De Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 323 sq.; B.K. p. 523, note. In the eighteenth century the procession

took place on the third Sunday in June, which must always have been within about a week of Midsummer Day (H. Gaidoz, "Le dieu gaulois du soleil et le symbolisme de la roue," *Revue Archéologique*, iii. série iv. 32 sq.).

leaves or in green scaly skins, who squirted water on the people from pewter syringes. An English spectator has compared these maskers to the Green Men of our own country on May Day. Last of all came the giant and giantess. The giant was a huge figure of wicker-work, occasionally as much as forty-five feet high, dressed in a long blue robe with gold stripes, which reached to his feet, concealing the dozen or more men who made it dance and bob its head to the spectators. This colossal effigy went by the name of Papa Reuss, and carried in its pocket a bouncing infant of Brobdignagian proportions, who kept bawling "Papa! papa!" in a voice of thunder, only pausing from time to time to devour the victuals which were handed out to him from the windows. The rear was brought up by the daughter of the giant, constructed, like her sire, of wicker-work, and little, if at all, inferior to him in size. She wore a rose-coloured robe, with a gold watch as large as a warming pan at her side; her breast glittered with jewels; her complexion was high, and her eyes and head turned with as easy a grace as the men inside could contrive to impart to their motions. The procession came to an end with the revolution of 1789, and has never been revived. The giant himself indeed, who had won the affections of the townspeople, survived his ancient glory for a little while and made shift to appear in public a few times more at the Carnival and other festal occasions; but his days were numbered, and within fifty years even his memory had seemingly perished.¹

Most towns and even villages of Brabant and Flanders have, or used to have, similar wicker giants which were annually led about to the delight of the populace, who loved these grotesque figures, spoke of them with patriotic enthusiasm, and never wearied of gazing at them. The name by which the giants went was Reuzes, and a special song called the Reuze song was sung in the Flemish dialect

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, xxix. (1759), pp. 263-265; Madame Clément, *Histoire des fêtes civiles et religieuses du département du Nord*,² pp. 169-175; De Nore, *Contumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, pp. 328-332. Compare John Milner, *The History, Civil and Ecclesiastical, and*

Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester, i. 8 sq.; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 325 sq.; James Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, ii. 358 (new edition). According to the writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* the name of the procession was the Cor-mass.

while they were making their triumphal progress through the streets. The most celebrated of these monstrous effigies were those of Anvers and Wetteren. At Ypres a whole family of giants contributed to the public hilarity at the Carnival. At Cassel and Hazebrouck, in the French department of Nord, the giants made their annual appearance on Shrove Tuesday.¹ In England artificial giants seem to have been a standing feature of the midsummer festival. A writer of the sixteenth century speaks of "Midsommer pageants in London, where, to make the people wonder, are set forth great and ugly gyants, marching as if they were alive, and armed at all points, but within they are stuffed full of browne paper and tow, which the shrewd boyes, underpeeping, do guilefully discover, and turne to a greate derision."² The Mayor of Chester in 1599 "altered many antient customs, as the shooting for the sheriff's breakfast; the going of the giants at Midsommer, etc."³

In these cases the giants only figure in the processions. But sometimes they were burned in the summer bonfires. Thus the people of the Rue aux Ours in Paris used annually to make a great wicker-work figure, dressed as a soldier, which they promenaded up and down the streets for several days, and solemnly burned on the third of July, the crowd of spectators singing *Salve Regina*. A personage who bore the title of king presided over the ceremony with a lighted torch in his hand. The burning fragments of the image were scattered among the people, who eagerly scrambled for them. The custom was abolished in 1743.⁴ In Brie, Isle de France, a wicker-work giant, eighteen feet high, was annually burned on Midsummer Eve.⁵

Again, the Druidical custom of burning live animals, enclosed in wicker-work, has its counterpart at the spring and midsummer festivals. At Luchon in the Pyrenees on Mid-

¹ Madame Clément, *Histoire des fêtes civiles et religieuses, etc., de la Belgique méridionale, etc.* (Avesnes, 1846), p. 252; Reinsberg-Duringfeld, *Calendrier Belge*, pp. 123-126. We may conjecture that the Flemish *Reue*, like the *Reues* of Dunkirk, is only another form of the German *Riese*, "giant."

² Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*,

1589, p. 128, quoted by Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 323.

³ King's *Vale Royal of England*, p. 208, quoted by Brand, *l.c.*

⁴ Liebrecht, *Gervasius von Tilbury*, p. 212 sq.; De Nore, *Contumes, Mythes, et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 354 sq.; B.K. p. 514.

⁵ B.K. pp. 514, 523.

summer Eve "a hollow column, composed of strong wicker-work, is raised to the height of about sixty feet in the centre of the principal suburb, and interlaced with green foliage up to the very top; while the most beautiful flowers and shrubs procurable are artistically arranged in groups below, so as to form a sort of background to the scene. The column is then filled with combustible materials, ready for ignition. At an appointed hour—about 8 P.M.—a grand procession, composed of the clergy, followed by young men and maidens in holiday attire, pour forth from the town chanting hymns, and take up their position around the column. Meanwhile, bonfires are lit, with beautiful effect, in the surrounding hills. As many living serpents as could be collected are now thrown into the column, which is set on fire at the base by means of torches, armed with which about fifty boys and men dance around with frantic gestures. The serpents, to avoid the flames, wriggle their way to the top, whence they are seen lashing out laterally until finally obliged to drop, their struggles for life giving rise to enthusiastic delight among the surrounding spectators. This is a favourite annual ceremony for the inhabitants of Luchon and its neighbourhood, and local tradition assigns it to a heathen origin."¹ In the midsummer fires formerly kindled on the Place de Grève at Paris it was the custom to burn a basket, barrel, or sack full of live cats, which was hung from a tall mast in the midst of the bonfire; sometimes a fox was burned. The people collected the embers and ashes of the fire and took them home, believing that they brought good luck. The French kings often witnessed these spectacles and even lit the bonfire with their own hands. In 1648 Louis the Fourteenth, crowned with a wreath of roses and carrying a bunch of roses in his hand, kindled the fire, danced at it and partook of the banquet afterwards in the town hall. But this was the last occasion when a monarch presided at the midsummer bonfire in Paris.² At Metz midsummer fires were lighted

¹ *Athenaeum*, 24th July 1869, p. 115; *B.R.* p. 515 sq.

² A. Breuil, "Du culte de St. Jean Baptiste," *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, viii. (1845), p. 187 sq.; De Nore, *Contumes, Mythes*

et Traditions des Provinces de France, p. 355 sq.; J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 388; Cortel, *Essai sur les fêtes religieuses*, p. 213 sq.; Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du centre de la France*, i. 82; Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 515.

with great pomp on the esplanade, and a dozen cats, enclosed in wicker-cages, were burned alive in them, to the amusement of the people.¹ In Russia a white cock was sometimes burned in the midsummer bonfire;² in Meissen or Thüringen a horse's head used to be thrown into it.³ Sometimes animals are burned in the spring bonfires. In the Vosges cats were burned on Shrove Tuesday; in Elsass they were thrown into the Easter bonfire.⁴ In the department of the Ardennes cats were flung into the bonfires kindled on the first Sunday in Lent; sometimes, by a refinement of cruelty, they were hung over the fire from the end of a pole and roasted alive. As a diabolic animal, the cat could never suffer enough. While the creatures were perishing in the flames, the shepherds gathered their flocks and forced them to leap over the fire, esteeming this an infallible means of preserving them from disease and witchcraft.⁵ We have seen that squirrels were sometimes burned in the Easter fire.

If the men who were burned in wicker frames by the Druids represented the spirit of vegetation, the animals burned along with them may have had the same meaning. Amongst the animals burned by the Druids or in modern bonfires have been, as we saw, cattle, cats, foxes, and cocks; and all of these creatures are variously regarded by European peoples as embodiments of the corn-spirit.⁶ I am not aware of any certain evidence that in Europe serpents have been regarded as representatives of the tree-spirit or corn-spirit;⁷ as victims at the midsummer festival in Luchon they may

¹ Tessier, in *Mémoires et Dissertations publiées par la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France*, v. (1823), p. 388; *B.A.*, p. 515.

² Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,¹ i. 519; *B.A.*, p. 515.

³ *B.A.*, (p. 515; Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfesten*, p. 34.

⁴ *B.A.*, p. 515.

⁵ A. Meyrac, *Traditions, Légendes, et Contes des Ardennes*, p. 68.

⁶ Above, vol. ii. p. 261 *seq.*

⁷ Some of the serpents worshipped by the old Prussians lived in hollow oaks, and as oaks were sacred among the Prussians, the serpents may have

been regarded as genii of the trees. See Simon Grunau, *Preussische Chronik*, ed. Perlbach, i. 89; Hartknoch, *Alt und Neues Preussen*, pp. 143, 163. Serpents, again, played an important part in the worship of Demeter, as we have seen. But that they were regarded as embodiments of her can hardly be assumed. In Siam the spirit of the *bakkien* tree is believed to appear, sometimes in the form of a woman, sometimes in the form of a serpent (Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, iii. 251). The vipers that haunted the balsam trees in Arabia were regarded by the Arabs as sacred to the trees (Pausanias, ix. 28. 4).

have replaced animals which really had this representative character. When the meaning of the custom was forgotten, self-interest and humanity might unite in suggesting the substitution of noxious reptiles as victims in room of harmless and useful animals.

Thus it appears that the sacrificial rites of the Celts of ancient Gaul can be traced in the popular festivals of modern Europe. Naturally it is in France, or rather in the wider area comprised within the limits of ancient Gaul, that these rites have left the clearest traces in the customs of burning giants of wicker-work and animals enclosed in wicker-work or baskets. These customs, it will have been remarked, are generally observed at or about midsummer. From this we may infer that the original rites of which these are the degenerate successors were solemnised at midsummer. This inference harmonises with the conclusion suggested by a general survey of European folk-custom, that the midsummer festival must on the whole have been the most widely diffused and the most solemn of all the yearly festivals celebrated by the primitive Aryans in Europe. And in its application to the Celts this general conclusion is corroborated by the more or less perfect vestiges of midsummer fire-festivals which we have found lingering in all those westernmost promontories and islands which are the last strongholds of the Celtic race in Europe — Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, the Isle of Man, Scotland, and Ireland. In Scotland, it is true, the chief Celtic fire-festivals certainly appear to have been held at Beltane (the first of May) and Hallowe'en; but this was exceptional.

To sum up: the combined evidence of ancient writers and of modern folk-custom points to the conclusion that amongst the Celts of Gaul an annual festival was celebrated at midsummer, at which living men, representing the tree-spirit or spirit of vegetation, were enclosed in wicker-frames and burned. The whole rite was designed as a charm to make the sun to shine and the crops to grow.

But there are some grounds for thinking that another great feature of the Celtic midsummer festival was the gathering of the sacred mistletoe by the Druids. The elaborate ceremonies which were observed by these wizards

when they culled the holy plant have been described by Pliny. After enumerating the different kinds of mistletoe, he proceeds: "In treating of this subject, the admiration in which the mistletoe is held throughout Gaul ought not to pass unnoticed. The Druids, for so they call their wizards, esteem nothing more sacred than the mistletoe and the tree on which it grows, provided only that the tree is an oak. But apart from this they choose oak-woods for their sacred groves and perform no sacred rites without oak-leaves; so that the very name of Druids may be regarded as a Greek appellation derived from their worship of the oak.¹ For they believe that whatever grows on these trees is sent from heaven, and is a sign that the tree has been chosen by the god himself. The mistletoe is very rarely to be met with; but when it is found, they gather it with solemn ceremony. This they do especially on the sixth day of the moon, from which they date the beginning of their months, of their years, and of their thirty years' cycle, because by the sixth day the moon has plenty of vigour, and has not run half its course. After due preparations have been made for a sacrifice and a feast under the tree, they hail it as the universal healer and bring to the spot two white bulls, whose horns have never been bound before. A priest clad in a white robe climbs the tree and with a golden sickle cuts the mistletoe, which is caught in a white cloth. Then they sacrifice the victims, praying that God may make his own gift to prosper with those upon whom he has bestowed it. They believe that a potion prepared from mistletoe will make barren animals to bring forth, and that the plant is a remedy against all poison."²

¹ Pliny derives the name Druid from the Greek *dris*, "oak." He did not know that the Celtic word for oak was the same (*dair*), and that therefore Druid, in the sense of priest of the oak, was genuine Celtic, not borrowed from the Greek. See Curtius, *Griech. Etymologie*,⁵ p. 238 sq.; Vaniček, *Gräechisch-lateinisches etymolog. Wörterbuch*, p. 368 sq.; J. Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom*, p. 221 sqq. In the Highlands of Scotland the word is found in place-names like Bendarroch (the

mountain of the oak), Craigandarroch, etc.

² Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xvi. 249 sqq. On the Celtic worship of the oak, see also Maximus Tyrius, *Dissert.* viii. 8: *Κέλτοι σέβουσι μὲν διὰ ἀγαθὸν δὲ διὰ Κελτικὸν ὑψηλὴν ὄρεα*. With the Druidical mode of gathering the mistletoe compare the following. In Cambodia when a man perceives a certain parasitic plant growing on a tamarind-tree, he dresses in white and taking a new earthen pot climbs the tree at mid-day.

In saying that the Druids cut the mistletoe especially on the sixth day of the moon,¹ Pliny seems to imply that they procured a fresh supply of it every month. But we may surmise that they also gathered the sacred plant with the same solemn ceremony on Midsummer Eve. For in France and England, the countries where the sway of the Druids is known to have been most firmly established, Midsummer Eve is still the time for culling certain magic plants, whose evanescent virtue can be secured at this mystic season alone. Indeed all over Europe antique fancies of the same sort have lingered about Midsummer Eve, imparting to it a fragrance

He puts the plant in the pot and lets the whole fall to the ground. Then in the pot he makes a decoction which renders invulnerable. See Aymonier, "Notes sur les coutumes et croyances superstitieuses des Cambodgiens," *Cochinchine Française: Excursions et Reconnaissances*, No. 16, p. 136. Branches of the sacred olive at Olympia, which were to form the victors' crowns, had to be cut with a golden sickle by a boy whose parents were both alive (Schol. on Pindar, *Olymp.* iii. 60). It has been a rule of superstition both in ancient and modern times that certain plants, to which medical or magical virtues were attributed, should not be cut with iron. See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xx. 19, xxiv. 68, 103, 176; Villemarqué, *Barzaz Breiz, Chants Populaires de la Bretagne*,⁸ p. 76; Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du centre de la France*, i. 233; *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iv. (1859), p. 153 sq. In antiquity some thought that the marvellous properties of the mistletoe were heightened if the plant had been gathered from the oak without the use of iron and without being allowed to touch the ground; in that case the plant could cure epilepsy and aid women to conceive (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxiv. 12). Swabian peasants, who ascribe great virtue to mistletoe that grows on an oak, say that it should not be cut in the common way but shot down with an arrow, when the sun is in Sagittarius, on the first, third, or fourth day before the new moon, and

that it should be caught in the left hand as it falls from the tree (E. Meier, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853), p. 443 sq.). On the objection to the use of iron in such cases, see Liebrecht, *Gervasius von Tilbury*, p. 103; and above, vol. i. p. 344 sqq.

¹ In the first edition of this book I understood Pliny to say that the ceremony fell in the sixth month—that is, in June, and hence I argued that it probably formed part of the midsummer festival. But in accordance with Latin usage the words of Pliny (*sexta luna*, literally "sixth moon") can only mean "the sixth day of the moon." I have to thank Mr. W. Warde Fowler for courteously pointing out my mistake to me. Compare my note in the *Athenæum*, November 21st, 1891, p. 687. I also misunderstood Pliny's words "*et sæculi post tricesimum annum, quia jam virum abunde habeat nec sit sui dividia*," applying them to the tree instead of to the moon, to which they really refer. After *sæculi* we must understand *principium* from the preceding *principia*. With the thirty years' cycle of the Druids we may compare the sixty years' cycle of the Boeotian festival of the Great Dactala (vol. i. p. 225 sq.), which like the Druidical rite in question was essentially a worship, or perhaps rather a conjuration, of the sacred oak. Whether any deeper affinity, based on common Aryan descent, may be traced between the Boeotian and the Druidical ceremony, I do not pretend to determine.

of the past, like withered rose leaves that, found by chance in the pages of an old volume, still smell of departed summers. Thus in Saintonge and Aunis, two of the ancient provinces of Western France, we read that "of all the festivals for which the merry bells ring out there is not one which has given rise to a greater number of superstitious practices than the festival of St. John the Baptist. The Eve of St. John was the day of all days for gathering the wonderful herbs by means of which you could combat fever, cure a host of diseases, and guard yourself against sorcerers and their spells. But in order to attain these results two conditions had to be observed; first, you must be fasting when you gathered the herbs, and second, you must cull them before the sun rose. If these conditions were not fulfilled, the plants had no special virtue."¹ In the neighbouring province of Périgord the person who gathered the magic herbs before sunrise at this season had to walk backwards, to mutter some mystic words, and to perform certain ceremonies. The plants thus collected were carefully kept as an infallible cure for fever; placed above beds and the doors of houses and of cattle-sheds they protected man and beast from disease, witchcraft, and accident.² In Normandy a belief in the marvellous properties of herbs and plants, of flowers and seeds and leaves gathered, with certain traditional rites, on the Eve or the Day of St. John has remained part of the peasant's creed to this day. Thus he fancies that seeds of vegetables and plants, which have been collected on St. John's Eve, will keep better than others, and that flowers plucked that day will never fade.³ In the Vosges Mountains they say that wizards have but one day in the year, and but one hour in that day, to find and cull the baleful herbs which they use in their black art. That day is the Eve of St. John, and that hour is the time when the church bells are ringing the noon-day Angelus. Hence in many villages they say that the bells ought not to ring at noon on that day.⁴ In the Tyrol

¹ J. L. M. Nogues, *Les mœurs d'autrefois en Saintonge et en Aunis*, p. 71.

² De Nore, *Contumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 150 sq.

³ Lecœur, *Esquisses du bocage Normand*, ii. pp. 8, 224; Bosquet, *La Normandie romanesque et merveilleuse*, p. 294.

⁴ Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 168 sq.

they think that the witching hour is when the Ave Maria bell is ringing on Midsummer Eve, for then the witches go forth to gather the noxious plants whereby they raise thunderstorms. Therefore in many districts the bells ring for a shorter time than usual that evening;¹ at Folgarait the sexton used to steal quietly into the church, and when the clock struck three he contented himself with giving a few pulls to the smallest of the bells.² In the Mark of Brandenburg the peasants gather all sorts of simples on Midsummer Day, because they are of opinion that the drugs produce their medicinal effect only if they have been culled at that time. Many of these plants, especially roots, must be dug up at midnight and in silence.³ In Mecklenburg not merely is a special healing virtue ascribed to simples collected on Midsummer Day; the very smoke of such plants, if they are burned in the fire, is believed to protect a house against thunder and lightning, and to still the raging of the storm.⁴ The Wends of the Spreewald twine wreaths of herbs and flowers at midsummer, and hang them up in their rooms; and when any one gets a fright he will lay some of the leaves and blossoms on hot coals and fumigate himself with the smoke.⁵ In Eastern Prussia, some two hundred years ago, it used to be customary on Midsummer Day to make up a bunch of herbs of various sorts and fasten it to a pole, which was then put up over the gate or door through which the corn would be brought in at harvest. Such a pole was called Kaupole, and it remained in its place till the crops had been reaped and garnered. Then the bunch of herbs was taken down; part of it was put with the corn in the barn to keep rats and mice from the grain, and part was kept as a remedy for diseases of all sorts.⁶ A writer of the early part of the seventeenth century informs us that the

¹ Ziegler, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853), p. 332 sq.; *id.*, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,² p. 158, §§ 1345, 1348.

² Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, p. 237, § 24.

³ A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 330.

⁴ K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und*

Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg, ii. p. 287, § 1436.

⁵ W. von Schulenburg, *Wendische Volkssagen und Gebräuche aus dem Spreewald*, p. 254.

⁶ Prætorius, *Deliciae Prussicae*, p. 24 sq. Kaupole is probably identical in name with Kupole or Kupalo, as to whom see above, vol. ii. pp. 105, 129 sq.

Livonians, among whom he lived, were impressed with a belief in the great and marvellous properties possessed by simples which had been culled on Midsummer Day. Such simples, they thought, were sure remedies for fever and for sickness and pestilence in man and beast; but if gathered one day too late they lost all their virtue.¹ Among the Letts of the Baltic provinces of Russia girls and women go about on Midsummer Day crowned with wreaths of aromatic plants, which are afterwards hung up for good luck in the houses. The plants are also dried and given to cows to eat, because they are supposed to help the animals to calve.² In Bulgaria St. John's Day is the special season for culling simples. On this day, too, Bulgarian girls gather nosegays of a certain white flower, throw them into a vessel of water, and place the vessel under a rose-tree in bloom. Here it remains all night. Next morning they set it in the courtyard and dance singing round it. An old woman then takes the flowers out of the vessel, and the girls wash themselves with the water, praying that God would grant them health throughout the year. After that the old woman restores her nosegay to each girl and promises her a rich husband.³

Sometimes in order to produce the desired effect it is deemed necessary that seven or nine different sorts of plants should be gathered at this mystic season. Norman peasants, who wish to fortify themselves for the toil of harvest, will sometimes go out at dawn on St. John's Day and pull seven kinds of plants, which they afterwards eat in their soup as a means of imparting strength and suppleness to their limbs in the harvest field.⁴ In Mecklenburg maidens are wont to gather seven sorts of flowers at noon on Midsummer Eve. These they weave into garlands, and sleep with them under their pillows. Then they are sure to dream of the men who will marry them.⁵ But the flowers on which youthful lovers

¹ P. Einhorn, "Wiederlegunge der Abgötterey: der ander (sic) Theil," printed at Riga in 1627, and reprinted in *Scriptores rerum Livonicarum*, ii. (Riga and Leipsic, 1848), p. 651 sq.

² J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, ii. 26.

³ A. Strausz, *Die Bulgaren* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 348, 386.

⁴ Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 9.

⁵ Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. 285.

dream at Midsummer Eve are oftener nine in number. Thus in Voigtland nine different kinds of flowers are twined into a garland at the hour of noon, but they may not enter the dwelling by the door in the usual way; they must be passed through the window, or, if they come in at the door, they must be thrown, not carried, into the house. Sleeping on them that night you will dream of your future wife or future husband.¹ The Bohemian maid, who gathers nine kinds of flowers on which to dream of love at Midsummer Eve, takes care to wrap her hand in a white cloth, and afterwards to wash it in dew; and when she brings her garland home she must speak no word to any soul she meets by the way, for then all the magic virtue of the flowers would be gone.² Other Bohemian girls look into the book of fate at this season after a different fashion. They twine their hair with wreaths made of nine sorts of leaves, and go, when the stars of the summer night are twinkling in the sky, to a brook that flows beside a tree. There, gazing on the stream, the girl beholds, beside the broken reflections of the tree and the stars, the watery image of her future lord.³ So in Masuren maidens gather nosegays of wild flowers in silence on Midsummer Eve. At the midnight hour each girl takes the nosegay and a glass of water, and when she has spoken certain words she sees her lover mirrored in the water.⁴ Sometimes Bohemian damsels make a different use of their midsummer garlands twined of nine sorts of flowers. They lie down with the garland laid as a pillow under their right ear, and a hollow voice, swooning from underground, proclaims their destiny.⁵ Yet another mode of consulting the oracle by means of these same garlands is to throw them backwards and in silence upon a tree at the hour of noon, just when the flowers have been gathered. For every time that the wreath is thrown without sticking to the branches of the tree the girl will have a year to wait before she weds. This mode of divination is practised in Voigtland,⁶ and the same thing is done in Masuren, although we are not told that there the wreaths

¹ J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch*, etc., in *Voigtlande*, p. 376.

² Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Fest-Kalender aus Böhmen*, p. 312.

³ Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Tippen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² p. 72.

⁵ Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *loc. cit.*

⁶ J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch*, etc., in *Voigtlande*, p. 376.

must be composed of nine sorts of flowers.¹ However, in Masuren chaplets of nine kinds of herbs are gathered on St. John's Eve and put to a more prosaic use than that of presaging the course of true love. They are carefully preserved, and the people brew a sort of tea from them, which they administer as a remedy for many ailments; or they keep the chaplets under their pillows till they are dry, and thereupon dose their sick cattle with them.² In Esthonia the virtues popularly ascribed to wreaths of this sort are many and various. These wreaths, composed of nine kinds of herbs culled on the Eve or the Day of St. John, are sometimes inserted in the roof or hung up on the walls of the house, and each of them receives the name of one of the inmates. If the plants which have been thus dedicated to a girl happen to take root and grow in the chinks and crannies, she will soon wed; if they have been dedicated to an older person and wither away, that person will die. The people also give them as medicine to cattle at the time when the animals are driven forth to pasture; or they fumigate the beasts with the smoke of the herbs, which are burnt along with shavings from the wooden threshold. Bunches of the plants are also hung about the house to keep off evil spirits, and maidens lay them under their pillows to dream on.³ In Sweden the "Midsummer Brooms," made up of nine sorts of flowers gathered on Midsummer Eve, are put to nearly the same uses. Fathers of families hang up such "brooms" to the rafters, one for each inmate of the house; and he or she whose broom (*quast*) is the first to wither will be the first to die. Girls also dream of their future husbands with these bunches of flowers under their pillows. A decoction made from the flowers is, moreover, a panacea for all disorders, and if a bunch of them be hung up in the cattle shed, the Troll cannot enter to bewitch the beasts.⁴

Of the flowers which it has been customary to gather for purposes of magic or divination at midsummer none perhaps is so widely popular as St. John's wort (*Hypericum per-*

¹ Töppen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² *und äussern Leben der Ersten*, p. 362 p. 72.

² Töppen, *op. cit.* p. 71.

³ A. Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren* ⁴ L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 267 sq.

foratum). The reason for associating this particular plant with the great summer festival is perhaps not far to seek, for the flower blooms about Midsummer Day, and with its bright yellow petals and masses of golden stamens it might well pass for a tiny copy on earth of the great sun which reaches its culminating point in heaven at this season. Gathered on Midsummer Eve, or on Midsummer Day before sunrise, the blossoms are hung on doorways and windows to preserve the house against thunder, witches, and evil spirits; and various healing properties are attributed to the different species of the plant. In the Tyrol they say that if you put St. John's wort in your shoe before sunrise on Midsummer Day you may walk as far as you please without growing weary. In Scotland people carried it about their persons as an amulet against witchcraft. On the lower Rhine children twine chaplets of St. John's wort on the morning of Midsummer Day, and throw them on the roofs of the houses. Here, too, the people who danced round the midsummer bonfires used to wear wreaths of these yellow flowers in their hair, and to deck the images of the saints at wayside shrines with the blossoms. Sometimes they flung the flowers into the bonfires. In Sicily they dip St. John's wort in oil, and so apply it as a balm for every wound. During the Middle Ages the power which the plant notoriously possesses of banning devils won for it the name of *fuga daemonum*; and before witches and wizards were stretched on the rack or otherwise tortured, the flower used to be administered to them as a means of wringing the truth from their lips.¹ In Saintonge and Aunis the flowers served to detect the

¹ Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste*, p. 145; Wulke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*, § 134; Zingerle, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, t. (1853), p. 329; A. Schlossar, "Volksmeinung und Volksaberglaube aus der deutschen Steiermark," *Germania*, N. R., xxiv. (1891), p. 387; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 428; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 307, 312; Dyer, *Folk-lore of Plants*, pp. 62, 286; Friend, *Flowers and Flower Lore*, pp. 147, 149, 150, 540;

Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, p. 161 sq. One authority lays down the rule that you should gather the plant fasting and in silence (Brand, *op. cit.* p. 312). According to Sowerby, the *Hypericum perforatum* flowers in England about July and August (*English Botany*, xi. 295). We should remember, however, that in the old calendar Midsummer Day fell twelve days later than at present. The reform of the calendar probably put many old floral superstitions out of joint.

presence of sorcerers, for if one of these pestilent fellows entered a house, the bunches of St. John's wort, which had been gathered on Midsummer Eve and hung on the walls, immediately dropped their yellow heads as if they had suddenly faded.¹ Further, the edges of the calyx and petals of St. John's wort, as well as their external surface, are marked with dark purple spots and lines, which, if squeezed, yield a red essential oil soluble in spirits.² German peasants believe that this red oil is the blood of St. John,³ and this may be why the plant is supposed to heal all sorts of wounds.⁴ In Mecklenburg they say that if you pull up St. John's wort at noon on Midsummer Day you will find at the root a bead of red juice called St. John's blood; smear this blood on your shirt just over your heart, and no mad dog will bite you.⁵ In the Mark of Brandenburg the same blood, procured in the same manner and rubbed on the barrel of a gun, will make every shot from that gun to hit the mark.⁶ According to others, St. John's blood is found at noon on St. John's Day, and only then, adhering in the form of beads to the root of a weed called knawel, which grows in sandy soil. But some people say that these beads of red juice are not really the blood of the martyred saint, but only insects resembling the cochineal or kermes-berry.⁷

Yet another plant whose root has been thought to yield the blood of St. John is the mouse-ear hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*), which grows very commonly in dry exposed places, such as gravelly banks, sunny lawns, and the tops of park walls. "It blossoms from May to the end of July, presenting its elegant sulphur-coloured flowers to the noontide sun, while the surrounding herbage, and even its own foliage, is withered and burnt up;"⁸ and these round

¹ Noguez, *Les mœurs d'autrefois en Saintonge et en Anjou*, p. 71 sq.

² Sowerby, *English Botany*, xi. 295.

³ Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste*, p. 35.

⁴ Dyer, *Folk-lore of Plants*, p. 286; Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. p. 291, § 1450a. The Germans of Bohemia ascribe wonderful virtues to the red juice extracted from the yellow flowers of St. John's wort (W. Müller, *Beiträge zur*

Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren, p. 264).

⁵ Bartsch, *op. cit.* ii. p. 286, § 1433. The blood is also a preservative against many diseases (*op. cit.* ii. p. 290, § 1444).

⁶ Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 387, § 105.

⁷ *Die gestriegelte Ruckensphilosophie*, p. 246 sq.; Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste*, p. 147.

⁸ Sowerby, *English Botany*, xii. 1093.

yellow flowers may be likened not inaptly to the disc of the great luminary whose light they love. At Hildesheim, in Germany, people used to dig up hawkweed, especially on the Gallow's Hill, when the clocks were striking noon on Midsummer Day; and the blood of St. John, which they found at the roots, was carefully preserved in quills for good luck. A little of it smeared secretly on the clothes was sure to make the wearer fortunate in the market that day.¹ According to some the plant ought to be dug up with a gold coin.² Near Gablonz, in Bohemia, it used to be customary to make a bed of St. John's flowers, as they were called, on St. John's Eve, and in the night the saint himself came and laid his head on the bed; next morning you could see the print of his head on the flowers, which derived a healing virtue from the blessed touch, and were mixed with the fodder of sick cattle to make them whole.³ But whether these St. John's flowers were the mouse-ear hawkweed or not is doubtful.⁴

More commonly in Germany the name of St. John's flowers (*Johannisblumen*) appears to be given to the mountain arnica. In Voigtland the mountain arnica if plucked on St. John's Day and stuck in the fields, laid under the roof, or hung on the wall, is believed to protect house and fields from lightning and hail.⁵ So in some parts of Bavaria they think that no thunderstorm can harm a house which has a blossom of mountain arnica in the roof, and in the Tyrol the same flower fastened to the door will render the house fire-proof. But it is needless to remark that the flower, which takes its popular name from St. John, will be no protection against either fire or thunder unless it has been culled on the saint's own day.⁶ On the same day South Slavonian peasants gather white "St. John's flowers," and lay them in a sieve, one for each person in the house; he or

¹ K. Seifart, *Sagen, Märchen, Schwinke und Gebräuche aus Stadt und Stift Hildesheim*,² p. 177, § 12.

² Rochholz, *Deutscher Glaube und Branch*, i. 9.

³ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 98, § 681.

⁴ Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volks-
aberglaube*,² § 134.

⁵ J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbranch, etc.,
im Voigtlande*, p. 376.

⁶ *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde
des Königreichs Bayern*, iii. 342;
Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Mein-
ungen des Tiroler Volkes*,² p. 160, §
1363.

sbe whose flower droops its head before morning will die within the year.¹

Another plant which possesses wondrous virtues, if only it be gathered on the Eve or the Day of St. John, is mugwort or wormwood (*Artemisia vulgaris*). Hence, in France it goes by the name of the herb of St. John.² Near Péronne, in the French department of Somme, people used to go out fasting before sunrise on St. John's Day to cull the plant; put among the wheat in the barn it protected the corn against mice. In Artois people carried bunches of mugwort, or wore it round their body;³ in Poitou they still wear girdles of mugwort or hemp when they warm their backs at the midsummer fire as a preservative against back-ache at harvest;⁴ and the custom of wearing girdles of mugwort on the Eve or Day of St. John has caused the plant to be popularly known in Germany and Bohemia as St. John's girdle. In Bohemia such girdles are believed to protect the wearer for the whole year against ghosts, magic, misfortune, and sickness. People also weave garlands of the plant and look through them at the midsummer bonfire or put them on their heads; and by doing so they ensure that their heads will not ache nor their eyes smart all that year. Another Bohemian practice is to make a decoction of mugwort which has been gathered on St. John's Day; then, when your cow is bewitched and will yield no milk, you have only to wash the animal thrice with the decoction and the spell will be broken.⁵ In Germany, people used to crown their heads or gird their bodies with mugwort, which they afterwards threw into the midsummer bonfire, pronouncing certain rhymes and believing that they thus rid themselves of all their ill-luck.⁶ Sometimes wreaths or girdles of

¹ F. S. Krauss, *Volks-glaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 34.

² Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ ii. 1013; Gubernatis, *Mythologie des Plantes*, i. 189 sq.; Friend, *Flowers and Flower Lore*, p. 751.

³ Breuil, "Du culte de St. Jean-Baptiste," *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, viii. (1845), p. 224, note 1, quoting the curé of Manancourt, near Péronne.

⁴ L. Pineau, *Le folk-lore du Poitou* (Paris, 1892), p. 499.

⁵ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 90 sq., §§ 635-637.

⁶ Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, i. p. 249, § 283; Grimm, *D.M.*⁴ ii. 1013; Zingerle, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853), p. 331, and *ib.* iv. (1859), p. 42 (quoting a work of

mugwort were kept in houses, cattle-sheds, and sheep-folds throughout the year.¹ In Normandy such wreaths are a protection against thunder and thieves;² and stalks of mugwort hinder witches from laying their spells on the butter.³ In Mecklenburg, they say that if you will dig up a plant of mugwort at noon on Midsummer Day, you will find under the root a burning coal, which vanishes away as soon as the church bells have ceased to ring. If you find the coal and carry it off in silence, it will prove a remedy for all sorts of maladies.⁴ According to another German superstition, such a coal will turn to gold.⁵ English writers record the popular belief that a rare coal is to be found under the root of mugwort at a single hour of a single day in the year, namely, at noon on Midsummer Eve, and that this coal will protect him who carries it on his person from plague, carbuncle, lightning, fever, and ague.⁶ In Eastern Prussia, on St. John's Eve, people can foretell a marriage by means of mugwort; they bend two stalks of the growing plant outward, and then observe whether the stalks, after straightening themselves again, incline towards each other or not.⁷

A similar mode of divination has been practised both in England and in Germany with the orpine (*Sedum telephium*), a plant which grows on a gravelly or chalky soil about hedges, the borders of fields, and on bushy hills. It flowers in August, and the blossoms consist of dense clustered tufts of crimson or purple petals; sometimes, but rarely, the flowers are white.⁸ In England the plant is popularly known as Midsummer Men, because people used to plant slips of them in pairs on Midsummer Eve, one slip standing

(the seventeenth century); Vonbun, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, p. 133, note **. See also above, pp. 268, 270, 274.

¹ Gubernatis, *Mythologie der Plantes*, i. 190, quoting Du Cange.

² De Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 262.

³ Leccœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 8.

⁴ Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen, und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. 290, § 1445.

⁵ Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfesten*, p. 141.

⁶ Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 334, quoting Lupton and Thomas Hill.

⁷ Lemke, *Folkstümliches in Ostpreussen*, i. 21. As to mugwort (German *Beifuss*, French *armoïse*), see further Gubernatis, *Mythologie des Plantes*, ii. 16 sqq.; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ iii. 356 sq.

⁸ Sowerby, *English Botany*, vii. 1319.

for a young man and the other for a young woman. If the plants, as they grew up, bent towards each other, the couple would marry; if either of them withered, he or she whom it represented would die.¹ In Masuren and the Mark of Brandenburg the method of forecasting the future by means of the orpine is precisely the same.²

Another plant which popular superstition has often associated with the summer solstice is vervain. In some parts of Spain people gather vervain after sunset on Midsummer Eve, and wash their faces next morning in the water in which the plants have been allowed to steep overnight.³ In Normandy, the peasants cull vervain on the Day or the Eve of St. John, believing that, in addition to its medical properties, it possesses at this season the power of protecting the house from thunder and lightning, from sorcerers, demons, and thieves.⁴ Bohemian poachers wash their guns with a decoction of vervain and southernwood, which they have gathered naked before sunrise on Midsummer Day; guns which have been thus treated never miss the mark.⁵ In our own country vervain used to be sought for its magical virtues on Midsummer Eve.⁶ In the Tyrol they think that he who finds a four-leaved clover while the vesper-bell is ringing on Midsummer Eve can work magic

¹ Aubrey, *Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, p. 25 sq.; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 329 sqq.; Friend, *Flowers and Flower Lore*, p. 136. It seems that in England the course of love has sometimes been divined by means of sprigs of red sage placed in a basin of rose-water on Midsummer Eve (Brand, *op. cit.* i. 333).

² Töppen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² p. 71 sq.; Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen*, ii. 176, § 487. In Germany a root of orpine, dug up on St. John's morning and hung between the shoulders, is sometimes thought to be a cure for hemorrhoids (Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste*, p. 145). Perhaps the "oblong, tapering, fleshy, white humps" of the roots (Sowerby, *English Botany*, vii. 1319) are thought to bear some likeness to the hemorrhoids, and

to heal them on the principle that the remedy should resemble the disease.

³ Dr. Otero Acevado, in *Le Temps*, September 1898. See above, p. 297, note 2.

⁴ De Nore, *Contumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 262; Bosquet, *La Normandie romanesque et merveilleuse*, p. 294; Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, i. 287, ii. 8. In Saintonge and Aunis the plant was gathered on Midsummer Eve for the purpose of evoking or exorcising spirits (Nogues, *Les mœurs d'autrefois en Saintonge et en Aunis*, p. 72).

⁵ Grohman, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 207, § 1437.

⁶ Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen*, ii. 177, citing Chambers, *Edinburgh Journal*, 2nd July 1842.

from that time forth.¹ People in Berry say that the four-leaved clover is endowed with all its marvellous virtues only when it has been plucked by a virgin on the night of Midsummer Eve.² In Saintonge and Aunis the four-leaved clover, if it be found on the Eve of St. John, brings good luck at play.³

At Kirchvers, in Hesse, people run out to the fields at noon on Midsummer Day to gather camomile; for the flowers, plucked at the moment when the sun is at the highest point of his course, are supposed to possess the medicinal qualities of the plant in the highest degree. In heathen times the camomile flower, with its healing qualities, its yellow calix and white stamens, is said to have been sacred to the kindly and shining Balder and to have borne his name, being called *Balders-brâ*.⁴ In Westphalia, also, the belief prevails that camomile is most potent as a drug when it has been gathered on Midsummer Day;⁵ in Masuren the plant must always be one of the nine different kinds of plants that are culled on Midsummer Eve to form wreaths, and tea brewed from the flower is a remedy for many sorts of maladies.⁶ Thuringian peasants hold that if the root of the yellow mullein (*Verbascum*) has been dug up in silence with a ducat at midnight, on Midsummer Eve, and is worn in a piece of linen next to the skin, it will preserve the wearer from epilepsy.⁷ In Prussia girls go out into the fields on Midsummer Day, gather mullein, and hang it up over their beds. The girl whose flower is the first to wither will be the first to die.⁸ Perhaps the bright yellow flowers of mullein, clustering round the stem like lighted candles, may partly account for the association of the plant with the summer solstice. In Germany great mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) is called the King's Candle; in

¹ Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*, p. 107, § 919.

² Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France*, i. 288.

³ Nogues, *Les mœurs d'autrefois en Saintonge et en Aunis*, p. 71 sq.

⁴ W. Kollie, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche*, p. 72.

⁵ Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und*

Märchen aus Westfalen, ii. 177, § 488.

⁶ Toppen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² p. 71.

⁷ A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen*, p. 289, § 139.

⁸ Teitau und Temme, *Volkssagen Ostpreussens, Lithauens und Westpreussens*, p. 283.

England it is popularly known as High Taper. The yellow, hoary mullein (*Verbascum pulverulentum*) "forms a golden pyramid a yard high, of many hundreds of flowers, and is one of the most magnificent of British herbaceous plants."¹ We may trace a relation between mullein and the sun in the Prussian custom of bending the flower, after sunset, towards the point where the sun will rise, and praying at the same time that a sick person or a sick beast may be restored to health.² In Bohemia poachers fancy that they can render themselves invulnerable by swallowing the seed from a fir-cone which they have found growing upwards before sunrise on the morning of St. John's Day.³ Again, wild thyme gathered on Midsummer Day is used in Bohemia to fumigate the trees on Christmas Eve in order that they may grow well;⁴ in Voigtland a tea brewed from wild-thyme which has been pulled at noon on Midsummer Day is given to women in childbed.⁵

More famous, however, than these are the miraculous properties which popular superstition in many parts of Europe has attributed to the fern at this season. At midnight on Midsummer Eve the plant is supposed to bloom and soon afterwards to seed; and whoever catches the bloom or the seed is thereby endowed with supernatural knowledge and miraculous powers; above all, he knows where treasures lie hidden in the ground, and he can render himself invisible at will. But great precautions must be observed in procuring the wondrous bloom or seed, which else quickly vanishes like dew on sand or mist in the air. The seeker must neither touch it with his hand nor let it touch the ground; he spreads a white cloth under the plant, and the blossom or the seed falls into it. Beliefs of this sort concerning fern-seed have prevailed, with trifling variations of detail, in England, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Russia.⁶ In Bohemia the magic bloom is said to

¹ Sowerby, *English Botany*, iv. 549, 487.

² Tettau und Temme, *loc. cit.*

³ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 205, § 1426.

⁴ Grohmann, *op. cit.* p. 93, § 648.

⁵ J. A. E. Köhler, *Folksbrauch*, etc., im Voigtlande, p. 377.

⁶ Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 314 sqq.; Friend, *Flowers and Flower Lore*, p. 342; Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 242; Lecomte, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, i. 290;

be golden, and to glow or sparkle like fire.¹ In Russia, they say that at dead of night on Midsummer Eve the plant puts forth buds like glowing coals, which on the stroke of twelve burst open with a clap like thunder and light up everything near and far.²

Once more, people have fancied that if they cut a branch of hazel on Midsummer Eve it would serve them as a divining rod to discover treasures and water. This belief has existed in Moravia, Mecklenburg, and apparently in Scotland.³ In the Mark of Brandenburg, they say that if you would procure the mystic wand you must go to the hazel by night on Midsummer Eve, walking backwards, and when you have come to the bush you must silently put your hands between your legs and cut a fork-shaped stick; that stick will be the divining-rod, and, as such, will detect treasures buried in the ground. If you have any doubt as to the quality of the wand, you have only to hold it in water; for in that case your true divining-rod will squeak like a pig, but your spurious one will not.⁴

Many more examples might be cited of the marvellous virtues which certain plants have been supposed to acquire

Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² § 123; Vonbun, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, p. 133 sqq.; Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste*, p. 144; Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. 288, § 1437; Töppen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² p. 72; A. Schlossar, "Volksmeinung und Volksaberglaube aus der deutschen Steiermark," *Germania*, N. R., xlii. (1891), p. 387; Vornaleken, *Mythen und Bräuche des Volkes in Oesterreich*, p. 309; Von Alpenburg, *Mythen und Sagen Tirols*, p. 407 sq.; Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*, p. 103, § 882, p. 158, § 1350; Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, p. 237; Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 97, §§ 673-677; Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Fest-Kalender aus Böhmen*, p. 311 sq.; W. Müller, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren*, p. 265; Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, p. 161; Gubernatis, *Mythologie des Plantes*, ii. 144 sqq. In a South Slavonian story we read how a cowherd understood the language of animals, because fern-seed accidentally fell into his shoe on Midsummer Day (F. S. Krauss, *Sagen und Märchen der Südslaven*, ii. 424 sqq., No. 159). On this subject I may refer to my article, "The Language of Animals," *The Archaeological Review*, i. (1888), p. 164 sqq.

¹ Grohmann, *op. cit.* p. 97, §§ 673, 675.

² *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iv. (1859), p. 152 sq.; Gubernatis, *op. cit.* ii. 146.

³ W. Müller, *op. cit.* p. 265; Bartsch, *op. cit.* ii. 288, § 1439; J. Napier, *Folk-lore, or Superstitious Beliefs in the West of Scotland*, p. 125.

⁴ Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 330. As to the divining-rod in general, see Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, p. 55 sqq.

at the summer solstice, but the foregoing instances may suffice to prove that the superstition is widely spread, deeply rooted, and therefore probably very ancient in Europe. Hence it seems reasonable to conjecture that like so many other plants the sacred mistletoe may have acquired, in the eyes of the Druids, a double portion of its mystic qualities at the solstice in June, and that accordingly they may have regularly cut it with solemn ceremony on Midsummer Eve. The conjecture is confirmed when we find it to be still a rule of folk-lore that the mistletoe should be cut on this day.¹ Further, the peasants of Piedmont and Lombardy still go out on Midsummer morning to search the oak-leaves for the "oil of St. John," which is supposed to heal all wounds made with cutting instruments.² Originally, perhaps, the "oil of St. John" was simply the mistletoe, or a decoction made from it. For in Holstein the mistletoe, especially oak-mistletoe, is still regarded as a panacea for green wounds;³ and if, as is alleged, "all-healer" is the name of the plant in the modern Celtic speech of Brittany, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland,⁴ this can be nothing but a survival of the name by which, as we have seen, the Druids addressed the oak, or rather, perhaps, the mistletoe. At Lacauene, in France, the old Druidical belief in the mistletoe as an antidote to all poisons still survives among the people; they apply the plant to the stomach of the sufferer or give him a decoction of it to drink.⁵ In the north-east of Scotland people used to cut withes of mistletoe at the full moon in March; these they bent into circles and kept them for a year to cure hectic and other troubles.⁶ In some parts of Germany the mistletoe is

¹ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,¹ iii. 78, 353, referring to Dybeck.

² Gubernatis, *Mythologie des Plantes*, ii. 73.

³ Friend, *Flowers and Flower Lore*, p. 378. Hunters believe that the mistletoe heals all wounds and brings luck in hunting (Kuhn, *Ursprung der Feuers*,² p. 206).

⁴ Grimm, *D. V.*¹ ii. 1009. My friend Mr. R. A. Neil of Pembroke College has pointed out to me that in N. M'Alpine's *Gaelic Dictionary*

(Seventh Edition, Edinburgh and London, 1877, p. 432) the Gaelic word for mistletoe is given as *an t'uil* loe, which, Mr. Neil tells me, means "all-healer."

⁵ De Nore, *Contumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 102 sq.

⁶ Shaw, in Pennant's "Tour in Scotland," printed in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 136; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 151.

especially esteemed as a remedy for the ailments of children, who sometimes wear it hung round their neck as an amulet.¹

Thus it appears probable that the two main features of the Balder myth—the pulling of the mistletoe and the burning of the god—were reproduced in the great midsummer festival of the Celts. But in Seandinavia itself, the home of Balder, both these features of his myth can still be traced in the popular celebration of midsummer. For in Sweden on Midsummer Eve mistletoe is “diligently sought after, they believing it to be, in a high degree, possessed of mystic qualities; and that if a sprig of it be attached to the ceiling of the dwelling-house, the horse’s stall, or the cow’s crib, the ‘Troll’ will then be powerless to injure either man or beast.”² The oak mistletoe, we are told, is held in the highest repute in Sweden, and is commonly seen in farm-houses hanging from the ceiling to protect the dwelling from all barm, but especially from fire; and persons afflicted with the falling sickness think they can ward off attacks of the malady by carrying about with them a knife which has a handle of oak mistletoe. A Swedish remedy for other complaints is to hang a sprig of mistletoe round the sufferer’s neck, or to make him wear on his finger a ring made from the plant.³ Again, in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark huge bonfires are kindled on hills and eminences on Midsummer Eve.⁴ It does not appear, indeed, that any effigy is burned in these bonfires; but the burning of an effigy is a feature which might easily drop out after its meaning was forgotten. And the name of Balder’s balefires (*Balder’s Bålar*), by which these midsummer fires were formerly known in Sweden,⁵ puts their connection with Balder beyond the reach of doubt, and makes it certain that in former times either a living representative or an effigy of Balder must have been annually burned in them. Midsummer was the season sacred to Balder, and the Swedish poet Tegner, in placing the burning of Balder at mid-

¹ *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie*, i. (1853), p. 444; *id.*, iv. (1859), p. 41 sq.

² L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 269.

³ Kelly, *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore*, p. 185 sq.

⁴ Lloyd, *op. cit.* p. 259; Grimm, *D.M.* i. 517 sq.

⁵ Lloyd, *loc.*

summer,¹ may very well have followed an old tradition that the summer solstice was the time when the good god came to his untimely end.

Thus it has been shown that the leading incidents of the Balder myth have their counterparts in those fire-festivals of our European peasantry which undoubtedly date from a time long prior to the introduction of Christianity. The pretence of throwing the victim chosen by lot into the Beltane fire, and the similar treatment of the man clad all in green at the midsummer bonfire in Normandy, are indubitable traces of an older custom of actually burning human beings on these occasions; and the green dress of the Norman victim, coupled with the leafy envelope of the young fellow who trod out the midsummer fire at Moosheim, seems clearly to indicate that the persons who perished at these festivals did so in the character of tree-spirits or deities of vegetation. From all this we may reasonably infer that in the Balder myth on the one hand, and the fire-festivals and custom of gathering mistletoe on the other hand, we have, as it were, the two broken and dissevered halves of an original whole. In other words, we may assume with a fair degree of probability that the myth of Balder's death was not merely a myth, that is, a description of physical phenomena in imagery borrowed from human life; we may suppose that it was at the same time the explanation given of an annual custom of burning a human representative of the god, and cutting the mistletoe with solemn ceremony. If I am right, the story of Balder's tragic end formed, so to say, the text of the sacred drama which was acted year by year as a magical rite to cause the sun to shine and the trees to grow. The tale belonged, in short, to that class of nature myths which are meant to be supplemented by ritual; here, as so often, myth stood to magic in the relation of theory to practice.

But if the victims—the human Balders—who died by fire, whether in spring or at midsummer, did so as living

¹ Grimm, *D.M.* iii. 78, who adds, "*Mahnen die Johannisfeuer an Baldrs Leichenbrand!*" This pregnant hint, which contains in germ the solution of

the whole myth, has been quite lost on the mythologists who since Grimm's day have enveloped the subject in a cloud of learned dust.

embodiments of tree-spirits or deities of vegetation, it would seem that Balder himself must have been a tree-spirit or deity of vegetation. It becomes desirable, therefore, to determine, if we can, the particular kind of tree or trees, of which a personal representative was burned at the fire-festivals. For we may be quite sure that it was not as a representative of vegetation in general that the victim suffered death. The idea of vegetation in general is too abstract to be primitive. Most probably the victim at first represented a particular kind of sacred tree. Now of all European trees none has such claims as the oak to be considered as pre-eminently the sacred tree of the Aryans. Its worship is attested for all the great branches of the Aryan stock in Europe. We have seen that it was not only the sacred tree, but the principal object of worship, of both Celts and Lithuanians.¹ The roving Celts appear to have carried their worship of the oak with them even to Asia; for in the heart of Asia Minor the Galatian senate met in a place which bore the pure Celtic name of Drynemetum or "temple of the oak."² Among the Slavs the oak seems to have been the sacred tree of the great god Perun.³ According to Grimm, the oak ranked first among the holy trees of the Germans, and was indeed their chief god. It is certainly known to have been adored by them in the age of heathendom, and traces of its worship have survived in various parts of Germany almost to the present day.⁴ Among the ancient Italians the oak was sacred above all other trees.⁵ The image of Jupiter on the Capitol at Rome seems to have been originally nothing but a natural oak-tree.⁶ At Dodona, perhaps the oldest of all Greek sanctuaries, Zeus was worshipped as immanent in the sacred oak, and the rustling of its leaves in the wind was his voice.⁷ If, then, the

¹ Above, p. 327, and vol. i. pp. 168 sq., 186. On the worship of the oak in Europe, see P. Wagler, *Die Eiche in alter und neuer Zeit* (Berlin, 1891).

² Strabo, xii. 5. 1. The name is a compound of *dryn*, "oak," and *nemet*, "temple" (H. E. Tozer, *Selections from Strabo*, p. 284). We know from Jerome (*Commentar. in Epist. ad Galat.* book ii. preface) that the Galatians retained their native Celtic speech

as late as the fourth century of our era.

³ See above, vol. i. p. 168.

⁴ Grimm, *D.M.* i. 55 sq., 58 sq., ii. 542, iii. 187 sq.; Wagler, *op. cit.* p. 40 sqq.

⁵ Preller, *Röm. Mythol.* i. 168.

⁶ Livy, i. 10. Cp. C. Bötticher, *Der Baumkultus der Hellenen*, p. 133 sq.

⁷ Bötticher, *op. cit.* p. 111 sqq.; Preller, *Griech. Mythol.* ed. C. Robert,

great god of both Greeks and Romans was represented in some of his oldest shrines under the form of an oak, and if the oak was the principal object of worship of Celts, Germans, and Lithuanians, we may certainly conclude that this tree was one of the chief, if not the very chief divinity of the Aryans before the dispersion; and that their primitive home must have lain in a land which was clothed with forests of oak.¹

Now, considering the primitive character and remarkable similarity of the fire-festivals observed by all the branches of the Aryan race in Europe, we may infer that these festivals form part of the common stock of religious observances which the various peoples carried with them in their wanderings from their old home. But, if I am right, an essential feature of those primitive fire-festivals was the burning of a man who represented the tree-spirit. In view, then, of the place occupied by the oak in the religion of the Aryans, the presumption is that the tree so represented at the fire-festivals must originally have been the oak. So far as the Celts and Lithuanians are concerned, this conclusion will perhaps hardly be contested. But both for them and for the Germans it is confirmed by a remarkable piece of religious conservatism. The most primitive method known to man of producing fire is by rubbing two pieces of wood against each other till they ignite; and we have seen that this method is still used in Europe for kindling sacred fires such as the need-fire, and

i. 122 sqq; Wagler, *op. cit.* p. 2 sqq. It is noteworthy that at Olympia the only wood that might be used in sacrificing to Zeus was the white poplar (Pausanias, v. 14. 2). But it is probable that herein Zeus, who was an intruder at Olympia, merely accepted an old local custom which, long before his arrival, had been observed in the worship of Pelops (Pausanias, v. 13. 3).

¹ Without hazarding an opinion on the vexed question of the cradle of the Aryans, I may observe that in various parts of Europe the oak seems to have been formerly more common than it is now. In Denmark the present beech woods were preceded by oak woods, and these by the Scotch fir

(Lyell, *Antiquity of Man*, p. 9; J. Geikie, *Prehistoric Europe*, p. 486 sq.). In parts of North Germany it appears from the evidence of archives that the fir has ousted the oak (O. Schrader, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte* (Jena, 1890), p. 394). In prehistoric times the oak seems to have been the chief tree in the forests which clothed the valley of the Po: the piles on which the pile villages rested were of oak (W. Helbig, *Die Italiker in der Poebene*, p. 25 sq.). The classical tradition that in the olden time men subsisted largely on acorns is borne out by the evidence of the pile villages in Northern Italy, in which great quantities of acorns have been discovered. See Helbig, *op. cit.* pp. 16 sq., 26, 72 sq.

that most probably it was formerly resorted to at all the fire-festivals under discussion. Now it is sometimes prescribed that the need-fire, or other sacred fire, must be made by the friction of a particular kind of wood; and wherever the kind of wood is prescribed, whether among Celts, Germans, or Slavs, that wood is always the oak. Thus we have seen that amongst the Slavs of Masuren the new fire for the village is made on Midsummer Day by causing a wheel to revolve rapidly round an axle of oak till the axle takes fire.¹ When the perpetual fire which the ancient Slavs used to maintain chanced to go out, it was rekindled by the friction of a piece of oak-wood, which had been previously heated by being struck with a gray (not a red) stone.² In Germany the need-fire was regularly kindled by the friction of oak-wood;³ and in the Highlands of Scotland, both the Beltane and the need-fires were lighted by similar means.⁴ Now, if the sacred fire was regularly kindled by the friction of oak-wood, we may infer that originally the fire was also fed with the same material. In point of fact, the perpetual fire which burned under the sacred oak at the great Lithuanian sanctuary of Romove was fed with oak-wood;⁵ and that oak-wood was formerly the fuel burned in the midsummer fires may perhaps be inferred from the circumstance that in many mountain districts of Germany peasants are still in the habit of making up their cottage fire on Midsummer Day with a heavy block

¹ Above, p. 276.

² Praetorius, *Delicæ Prussicæ*, 19 sp. Mr. Ralston states (on what authority I do not know) that if the fire maintained in honour of the Lithuanian god Perkunas went out, it was rekindled by sparks struck from a stone which the image of the god held in his hand (*Songs of the Russian People*, p. 88).

³ Grimm, *D.M.* i. 502, 503; Kuhn, *Herabkunft des Feuers*,² p. 43; Colshorn, *Märchen und Sagen* (Hanover, 1854), pp. 234-236; Pröhle, *Harzbilder*, p. 75; Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. 150; Rochholz, *Deutscher Glaube und Brauch*, ii. 148. The writer who styles himself Montanus

says (*Die deutschen Volksfeste*, etc., p. 127) that the need-fire was made by the friction of oak and fir. Sometimes it is said that the need-fire should be made with nine different kinds of wood (Grimm, *D.M.* i. 503, 505; Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 380; Jahn, *Die deutschen Opfergebräuche*, p. 27); but the kinds of wood are not specified. At Delphi the perpetual fire was fed with fir-wood only (Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos*, 2).

⁴ John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 442; Grimm, *D.M.* i. 506. See above, p. 260.

⁵ Above, vol. i. p. 168 sq.

of oak-wood. The block is so arranged that it smoulders slowly and is not finally reduced to charcoal till the expiry of a year. Then upon next Midsummer Day the charred embers of the old log are removed to make room for the new one, and are mixed with the seed-corn or scattered about the garden. This is believed to promote the growth of the crops and to preserve them from blight and vermin.¹ It may be remembered that at the Boeotian festival of the Daedala, the analogy of which to the spring and midsummer festivals of modern Europe has been already pointed out, the great feature was the felling and burning of an oak.² The general conclusion is, that at those periodic or occasional ceremonies, of which the object was to cause the sun to shine and the fruits of the earth to grow, the ancient Aryans both kindled and fed the fire with the sacred oak-wood.

But if at these solemn rites the fire was regularly made of oak-wood, it follows that the man who was burned in it as a personification of the tree-spirit could have represented no tree but the oak. The sacred oak was thus burned in duplicate; the wood of the tree was consumed in the fire, and along with it was consumed a living man as a personification of the oak-spirit. The conclusion thus drawn for the European Aryans in general is confirmed in its special application to the Scandinavians by the relation in which amongst them the mistletoe appears to have stood to the burning of the victim in the midsummer fire. We have seen that among Scandinavians it has been customary to gather the mistletoe at midsummer. But so far as appears on the face of this custom, there is nothing to connect it with the midsummer fires in which human victims or effigies of them were burned. Even if the fire, as seems probable, was originally always made with oak-wood, why should it have been necessary to pull the mistletoe? The last link between the midsummer customs of gathering the mistletoe and lighting the bonfires is supplied by Balder's myth, which certainly cannot be disjoined from the customs in question. The myth shows that a vital connection must once have been

¹ Montanus, *Die deutschen Volksfeste*, etc., p. 127.

² Above, vol. i. p. 225 *sq.*

believed to subsist between the mistletoe and the human representative of the oak who was burned in the fire. According to the myth, Balder could be killed by nothing in heaven or earth except the mistletoe; and so long as the mistletoe remained on the oak, he was not only immortal but invulnerable. Now, as soon as we see that Balder was the oak, the origin of the myth becomes plain. The mistletoe was viewed as the seat of life of the oak, and so long as it was uninjured nothing could kill or even wound the oak. The conception of the mistletoe as the seat of life of the oak would naturally be suggested to primitive people by the observation that while the oak is deciduous, the mistletoe which grows on it is evergreen. In winter the sight of its fresh foliage among the bare branches must have been hailed by the worshippers of the tree as a sign that the divine life which had ceased to animate the branches yet survived in the mistletoe, as the heart of a sleeper still beats when his body is motionless. Hence when the god had to be killed—when the sacred tree had to be burnt—it was necessary to begin by breaking off the mistletoe. For so long as the mistletoe remained intact, the oak (so people might think) was invulnerable; all the blows of their knives and axes would glance harmless from its surface. But once tear from the oak its sacred heart—the mistletoe—and the tree nodded to its fall. And when in later times the spirit of the oak came to be represented by a living man, it was logically necessary to suppose that, like the tree he personated, he could neither be killed nor wounded so long as the mistletoe remained uninjured. The pulling of the mistletoe was thus at once the signal and the cause of his death.

But since the idea of a being whose life is thus, in a sense, outside itself, must be strange to many readers, and has, indeed, not yet been recognised in its full bearing on primitive superstition, it will be worth while to illustrate it by examples drawn both from story and custom. The result will be to show that, in assuming this idea as the explanation of the relation of Balder to the mistletoe, I assume a principle which is deeply engraved on the mind of primitive man.

§ 3. *The external Soul in Folk-tales*

In a former chapter we saw that, in the opinion of primitive people, the soul may temporarily absent itself from the body without causing death. Such temporary absences of the soul are often believed to involve considerable risk, since the wandering soul is liable to a variety of mishaps at the hands of enemies, and so forth. But there is another aspect to this power of disengaging the soul from the body. If only the safety of the soul can be ensured during its absence, there is no reason why the soul should not continue absent for an indefinite time; indeed a man may, on a pure calculation of personal safety, desire that his soul should never return to his body. Unable to conceive of life abstractly as a "permanent possibility of sensation" or a "continuous adjustment of internal arrangements to external relations," the savage thinks of it as a concrete material thing of a definite bulk, capable of being seen and handled, kept in a box or jar, and liable to be bruised, fractured, or smashed in pieces. It is not needful that the life, so conceived, should be in the man; it may be absent from his body and still continue to animate him, by virtue of a sort of sympathy or "action at a distance." So long as this object which he calls his life or soul remains unharmed, the man is well; if it is injured, he suffers; if it is destroyed, he dies. Or, to put it otherwise, when a man is ill or dies, the fact is explained by saying that the material object called his life or soul, whether it be in his body or out of it, has either sustained injury or been destroyed. But there may be circumstances in which, if the life or soul remains in the man, it stands a greater chance of sustaining injury than if it were stowed away in some safe and secret place. Accordingly, in such circumstances, primitive man takes his soul out of his body and deposits it for security in some snug spot, intending to replace it in his body when the danger is past. Or if he should discover some place of absolute security, he may be content to leave his soul there permanently. The advantage of this is that, so long as the soul remains unharmed in the place where he has deposited

it, the man himself is immortal; nothing can kill his body, since his life is not in it.

Evidence of this primitive belief is furnished by a class of folk-tales of which the Norse story of "The giant who had no heart in his body" is perhaps the best-known example. Stories of this kind are widely diffused over the world, and from their number and the variety of incident and of details in which the leading idea is embodied, we may infer that the conception of an external soul is one which has had a powerful hold on the minds of men at an early stage of history. For folk-tales are a faithful reflection of the world as it appeared to the primitive mind; and we may be sure that any idea which commonly occurs in them, however absurd it may seem to us, must once have been an ordinary article of belief. This assurance, so far as it concerns the supposed power of disengaging the soul from the body for a longer or shorter time, is amply corroborated by a comparison of the folk-tales in question with the actual beliefs and practices of savages. To this we shall return after some specimens of the tales have been given. The specimens will be selected with a view of illustrating both the characteristic features and the wide diffusion of this class of tales.¹

In the first place, the story of the external soul is told, in various forms, by all Aryan peoples from Hindoostan to

¹ A number of the following examples were collected by Mr. E. Clodd in his paper, "The Philosophy of Punchkin," *Folk-lore Journal*, ii. (1884), pp. 288-303; and again in his *Myths and Dreams* (London, 1885), pp. 188-198. The subject of the external soul, both in folk-tales and in custom, has been well handled by G. A. Wilken in his two papers, "De betrekking tusschen menschen, dieren- en plantenleven naar het volksgeloof," *De Indische Gids*, November 1884, pp. 595-612, and "De Simsonsage," *De Gids*, 1888, No. 5. In "De Simsonsage" Wilken has reproduced, to a great extent in the same words, most of the evidence cited by him in "De betrekking," yet without referring to that paper. When I wrote this book in 1889-1890 I was unacquainted with "De betrekking," but used with advantage "De Simson-

sage," a copy of it having been kindly sent me by the author. I am the more anxious to express my obligations to "De Simsonsage," because I have had little occasion to refer to it, most of the original authorities cited by the author being either in my own library or easily accessible to me in Cambridge. It would be a convenience to anthropologists if Wilken's valuable papers, dispersed as they are in various Dutch periodicals which are seldom to be met with in England, were collected and published together. After the appearance of my first anthropological essay in 1885, Professor Wilken entered into correspondence with me, and thenceforward sent me copies of his papers as they appeared; but of his papers published before that date I have not a complete set. (Note to the Second Edition.)

the Hebrides. A very common form of it is this: A warlock, giant, or other fairyland being is invulnerable and immortal because he keeps his soul hidden far away in some secret place; but a fair princess, whom he holds enthralled in his enchanted castle, wiles his secret from him and reveals it to the hero, who seeks out the warlock's soul, heart, life, or death (as it is variously called), and, by destroying it, simultaneously kills the warlock. Thus a Hindoo story tells how a magician called Punchkin held a queen captive for twelve years, and would fain marry her, but she would not have him. At last the queen's son came to rescue her, and the two plotted together to kill Punchkin. So the queen spoke the magician fair, and pretended that she had at last made up her mind to marry him. "And do tell me," she said, "are you quite immortal? Can death never touch you? And are you too great an enchanter ever to feel human suffering?" "It is true," he said, "that I am not as others. Far, far away—hundreds of thousands of miles from this—there lies a desolate country covered with thick jungle. In the midst of the jungle grows a circle of palm-trees, and in the centre of the circle stand six chattees full of water, piled one above another; below the sixth chattee is a small cage, which contains a little green parrot—on the life of the parrot depends my life—and if the parrot is killed I must die. It is, however," he added, "impossible that the parrot should sustain any injury, both on account of the inaccessibility of the country, and because, by my appointment, many thousand genii surround the palm-trees, and kill all who approach the place." But the queen's young son overcame all difficulties, and got possession of the parrot. He brought it to the door of the magician's palace, and began playing with it. Punchkin, the magician, saw him, and, coming out, tried to persuade the boy to give him the parrot. "Give me my parrot!" cried Punchkin. Then the boy took hold of the parrot and tore off one of his wings; and as he did so the magician's right arm fell off. Punchkin then stretched out his left arm, crying, "Give me my parrot!" The prince pulled off the parrot's second wing, and the magician's left arm tumbled off. "Give me my parrot!" cried he, and fell

on his knees. The prince pulled off the parrot's right leg, the magician's right leg fell off; the prince pulled off the parrot's left leg, down fell the magician's left. Nothing remained of him except the lifeless body and the head; but still he rolled his eyes, and cried, "Give me my parrot!" "Take your parrot, then," cried the boy; and with that he wrung the bird's neck, and threw it at the magician; and, as he did so, Punchkin's head twisted round, and, with a fearful groan, he died!¹ In another Hindoo tale an ogre is asked by his daughter, "Papa, where do you keep your soul?" "Sixteen miles away from this place," he said, "is a tree. Round the tree are tigers, and bears, and scorpions, and snakes; on the top of the tree is a very great fat snake; on his head is a little cage; in the cage is a bird; and my soul is in that bird." The end of the ogre is like that of the magician in the previous tale. As the bird's wings and legs are torn off, the ogre's arms and legs drop off; and when its neck is wrung he falls down dead.²

In another Hindoo story a princess called Sodewa Bai was born with a golden necklace about her neck, and the astrologer told her parents, "This is no common child; the necklace of gold about her neck contains your daughter's soul; let it, therefore, be guarded with the utmost care; for if it were taken off and worn by another person, she would die." So her mother caused it to be firmly fastened round the child's neck, and, as soon as the child was old enough to understand, she told her its value, and warned her never to let it be taken off. In course of time Sodewa Bai was married to a prince who had another wife living. The first wife, jealous of her young rival, persuaded a negress to steal from Sodewa Bai the golden necklace which contained her soul. The negress did so, and, as soon as she put the necklace round her own neck, Sodewa Bai died. All day long the negress used to wear the necklace; but late at night, on going to bed, she would take it off and put it by till morning; and whenever she took it off, Sodewa Bai's

¹ Mary Frere, *Old Deccan Days*, p. 12 sqq.

² Maive Stokes, *Indian Fairy Tales*, p. 58 sqq. For similar Hindoo stories,

see *id.*, p. 187 sq.; Lal Behari Day, *Folk-tales of Bengal*, p. 121 sq.; F. A. Steel and R. C. Temple, *Wide-awake Stories*, p. 58 sqq.

soul returned to her and she lived. But when morning came, and the negress put on the necklace, Sodewa Bai died again. At last the prince discovered the treachery of his elder wife and restored the golden necklace to Sodewa Bai.¹ In another Hindoo story a holy mendicant tells a queen that she will bear a son, adding, "As enemies will try to take away the life of your son, I may as well tell you that the life of the boy will be bound up in the life of a big *boal*-fish which is in your tank in front of the palace. In the heart of the fish is a small box of wood, in the box is a necklace of gold, that necklace is the life of your son." The boy was born and received the name of Dalim. His mother was the Suo or younger queen. But the Duo or elder queen hated the child, and learning the secret of his life, she caused the *boal*-fish, with which his life was bound up, to be caught. Dalim was playing near the tank at the time, but "the moment the *boal*-fish was caught in the net, that moment Dalim felt unwell; and when the fish was brought up to land, Dalim fell down on the ground, and made as if he was about to breathe his last. He was immediately taken into his mother's room, and the king was astonished on hearing of the sudden illness of his son and heir. The fish was by the order of the physician taken into the room of the Duo queen, and as it lay on the floor striking its fins on the ground, Dalim in his mother's room was given up for lost. When the fish was cut open, a casket was found in it; and in the casket lay a necklace of gold. The moment the necklace was worn by the queen, that very moment Dalim died in his mother's room." The queen used to put off the necklace every night, and whenever she did so, the boy came to life again. But every morning when the queen put on the necklace, he died again.²

In a Cashmeer story a lad visits an old ogress, pretending to be her grandson, the son of her daughter who had married a king. So the old ogress took him into her confidence and showed him seven cocks, a spinning-wheel, a

¹ Mary Frere, *Old Deccan Days*, p. 239 sqq.

² Lal Behari Day, *op. cit.* p. 1 sqq.

For similar stories of necklaces, see *Old Deccan Days*, p. 233 sq.; *Wide-awake Stories*, p. 53 sqq.

pigeon, and a starling. "These seven cocks," said she, "contain the lives of your seven uncles, who are away for a few days. Only as long as the cocks live can your uncles hope to live; no power can hurt them as long as the seven cocks are safe and sound. The spinning-wheel contains my life; if it is broken, I too shall be broken, and must die; but otherwise I shall live on for ever. The pigeon contains your grandfather's life, and the starling your mother's; as long as these live, nothing can harm your grandfather or your mother." So the lad killed the seven cocks and the pigeon and the starling, and smashed the spinning-wheel; and at the moment he did so the ogres and ogresses perished.¹ In another story from Cashmeer an ogre cannot die unless a particular pillar in the verandah of his palace be broken. Learning the secret, a prince struck the pillar again and again till it was broken in pieces. And it was as if each stroke had fallen on the ogre, for he howled lamentably and shook like an aspen every time the prince hit the pillar, until at last, when the pillar fell down, the ogre also fell down and gave up the ghost.² In another Cashmeer tale an ogre is represented as laughing very heartily at the idea that he might possibly die. He said that "he should never die. No power could oppose him; no years could age him; he should remain ever strong and ever young, for the thing wherein his life dwelt was most difficult to obtain." It was in a queen bee, which was in a honeycomb on a tree. But the bees in the honeycomb were many and fierce, and it was only at the greatest risk that any one could catch the queen. However, the hero achieved the enterprise and crushed the queen bee; and immediately the ogre fell stone dead to the ground, so that the whole land trembled with the shock.³ In some Bengalce tales the life of a whole tribe of ogres is described as concentrated in two bees. The secret was thus revealed by an old ogress to a captive princess who pretended to fear lest the ogress should die. "Know, foolish girl," said the ogress, "that we ogres never die. We are not naturally immortal, but our life depends on a secret which no human being can unravel. Let me tell you what it is,

¹ J. H. Knowles, *Folk-tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), p. 49 sq.

² *Id.*, p. 134.

³ *Id.*, p. 382 sqq.

that you may be comforted. You know yonder tank ; there is in the middle of it a crystal pillar, on the top of which in deep water are two bees. If any human being can dive into the water and bring up the two bees from the pillar in one breath, and destroy them so that not a drop of their blood falls to the ground, then we ogres shall certainly die ; but if a single drop of blood falls to the ground, then from it will start up a thousand ogres. But what human being will find out this secret, or, finding it, will be able to achieve the feat ? You need not, therefore, darling, be sad ; I am practically immortal." As usual, the princess reveals the secret to the hero, who kills the bees, and that same moment all the ogres drop down dead, each on the spot where he happened to be standing.¹ In another Bengalee story it is said that all the ogres dwell in Ceylon, and that all their lives are in a single lemon. A boy cuts the lemon in pieces, and all the ogres die.²

In a Siamese or Cambodian story, probably derived from India, we are told that Thossakan or Ravana, the King of Ceylon, was able by magic art to take his soul out of his body and leave it in a box at home, while he went to the wars. Thus he was invulnerable in battle. When he was about to give battle to Rama, he deposited his soul with a hermit called Fire-eye, who was to keep it safe for him. So in the fight Rama was astounded to see that his arrows struck the king without wounding him. But one of Rama's allies, knowing the secret of the king's invulnerability, transformed himself by magic into the likeness of the king, and going to the hermit asked back his soul. On receiving it he soared up into the air and flew to Rama, brandishing the box and squeezing it so hard that all the breath left the King of Ceylon's body, and he died.³ In a Bengalee story a prince going into a far country planted with his own hands a tree in the courtyard of his father's palace, and said to his parents, " This tree is my life. When you see the tree green and fresh, then know that it is well with me ; when you see

¹ Lal Behari Day, *op. cit.* p. 85 sq., *cp. id.*, p. 253 sqq. ; *Indian Antiquary*, i. (1872), p. 117. For an Indian story in which a giant's life is in five black bees, see Clouston, *Popular Tales*

and Fictions, i. 350.

² *Indian Antiquary*, i. (1872), p. 171.

³ A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, iv. 304 sq.

the tree fade in some parts, then know that I am in an ill case; and when you see the whole tree fade, then know that I am dead and gone."¹ In another Indian tale a prince, setting forth on his travels, left behind him a barley plant, with instructions that it should be carefully tended and watched, for if it flourished, he would be alive and well, but if it drooped, then some mischance was about to happen to him. And so it fell out. For the prince was beheaded, and as his head rolled off, the barley plant snapped in two and the ear of barley fell to the ground.² In the legend of the origin of Gilgit there figures a fairy king whose soul is in the snows and who can only perish by fire.³

In Greek tales, ancient and modern, the idea of an external soul is not uncommon. When Meleager was seven days old, the Fates appeared to his mother and told her that Meleager would die when the brand which was blazing on the hearth had burnt down. So his mother snatched the brand from the fire and kept it in a box. But in after-years, being enraged at her son for slaying her brothers, she burnt the brand in the fire and Meleager expired in agonies, as if flames were preying on his vitals.⁴ Again, Nisus King of Megara had a purple or golden hair on the middle of his head, and it was fated that whenever the hair was pulled out the king should die. When Megara was besieged by the Cretans, the king's daughter Scylla fell in love with Minos, their king, and pulled out the fatal hair from her father's head. So he died.⁵ Similarly Poseidon made Pterelaus immortal by giving him a golden hair on his head. But

¹ Lal Behari Day, *op. cit.* p. 189.

² *Wide-awake Stories*, pp. 52, 64.

³ G. W. Leitner, *The Languages and Races of Dardistan*, p. 9.

⁴ Apollodorus, i. 8; Diogenes, iv. 34; Pausanias, x. 31. 4; Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 604 sqq.; Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* li.; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* lxxvii. vol. ii. p. 231, ed. Dindorf; Hyginus, *Fab.* 171, 174; Ovid, *Metam.* viii. 445 sqq. In his play on this theme Euripides made the life of Meleager to depend on an olive-leaf which his mother had given birth to along with the babe. See Malalas,

Chronographia, vi. p. 165 sq. ed. L. Dindorf; Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 492 sq.; G. Knaack, "Zur Meleager-sage," *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F., xlix. (1894), pp. 310-313.

⁵ Apollodorus, iii. 15. 8; Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 612 sqq.; Pausanias, i. 19. 4; *Ciris*, 116 sqq.; Ovid, *Metam.* viii. 8 sqq. According to Tzetzes (*Schol. on Lycophron*, 650) not the life but the strength of Nisus was in his golden hair; when it was pulled out, he became weak and was slain by Minos. According to Hyginus (*Fab.* 198) Nisus was destined to reign only so long as he kept the purple lock on his head.

when Taphos, the home of Pterelaus, was besieged by Amphitryo, the daughter of Pterelaus fell in love with Amphitryo and killed her father by plucking out the golden hair with which his life was bound up.¹ In a modern Greek folk-tale a man's strength lies in three golden hairs on his head. When his mother pulls them out, he grows weak and timid and is slain by his enemies.² Another Greek story, in which we may perhaps detect a reminiscence of Nisus and Scylla, relates how a certain king, who was the strongest man of his time, had three long hairs on his breast. But when he went to war with another king, and his own treacherous wife had cut off the three hairs, he became the weakest of men.³ In another modern Greek story the life of an enchanter is bound up with three doves which are in the belly of a wild boar. When the first dove is killed, the magician grows sick; when the second is killed, he grows very sick; and when the third is killed, he dies.⁴ In another Greek story of the same sort an ogre's strength is in three singing birds which are in a wild boar. The hero kills two of the birds, and then coming to the ogre's bouse finds him lying on the ground in great pain. He shows the third bird to the ogre, who begs that the hero will either let it fly away or give it to him to eat. But the hero wrings the bird's neck and the ogre dies on the spot.⁵ In a variant of the latter story the monster's strength is in two doves, and when the hero kills one of them, the monster cries out, "Ah, woe is me! Half my life is gone. Something must have happened to one of the doves." When the second dove is killed, he

¹ Apollodorus, ii. 4. 5 and 7.

² Hahn, *Griechische und albanesische Märchen*, i. 217; a similar story, *ibid.* ii. 282.

³ B. Schmidt, *Griechische Märchen, Sagen und Volkslieder*, p. 91 *sq.* The same writer found in the island of Zacynthus a belief that the whole strength of the ancient Greeks resided in three hairs on their breasts, and that it vanished whenever these hairs were cut; but if the hairs were allowed to grow again, their strength returned (B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neu-griechen*, p. 206). The Biblical story of Samson and Delilah (Judges xvi.)

implies a belief of the same sort, as G. A. Wilken abundantly showed in his paper, "De Simsonsage," *De Gids*, 1888, No. 5.

⁴ Hahn, *op. cit.* ii. 215 *sq.*

⁵ *Ibid.* ii. 275 *sq.* Similar stories, *ibid.* ii. 204, 294 *sq.* In an Albanian story a monster's strength is in three pigeons, which are in a hare, which is in the silver task of a wild boar. When the boar is killed, the monster feels ill; when the hare is cut open, he can hardly stand on his feet; when the three pigeons are killed, he expires (Dozon, *Contes albanais*, p. 132 *sq.*).

dies.¹ In another Greek story the incidents of the three golden hairs and three doves are artificially combined. A monster has on his head three golden hairs which open the door of a chamber in which are three doves: when the first dove is killed, the monster grows sick; when the second is killed, he grows worse; and when the third is killed, he dies.² In another Greek tale an old man's strength is in a ten-headed serpent. When the serpent's heads are being cut off, he feels unwell; and when the last head is struck off, he expires.³ In another Greek story a dervish tells a queen that she will have three sons, that at the birth of each she must plant a pumpkin in the garden, and that in the fruit borne by the pumpkins will reside the strength of the children. In due time the infants are born and the pumpkins planted. As the children grow up, the pumpkins grow with them. One morning the eldest son feels sick, and on going into the garden they find that the largest pumpkin is gone. Next night the second son keeps watch in a summer-house in the garden. At midnight a negro appears and cuts the second pumpkin. At once the boy's strength goes out of him, and he is unable to pursue the negro.⁴ The youngest son, however, succeeds in slaying the negro and recovering the lost pumpkins.⁴

Ancient Italian legend furnishes a close parallel to the Greek story of Melcager. Silvia, the young wife of Septimius Marcellus, had a child by the god Mars. The god gave her a spear, with which he said that the fate of the child would be bound up. When the boy grew up he quarrelled with his maternal uncles and slew them. So in revenge his mother burned the spear on which his life depended.⁵ In one of the stories of the *Pentamerone* a certain queen has a twin brother, a dragon. The astrologers declared at her birth that she would live just as long as the dragon and no longer, the death of the one involving the death of the other. If the dragon were killed, the only way to

¹ Hahn, *op. cit.* ii. 260 *sqq.*

² *Ibid.* i. 137.

³ *Ibid.* ii. 23 *sq.*

⁴ Legrand, *Contes populaires grecs*, p. 191 *sqq.*

⁵ Plutarch, *Parallela*, 26. In both the Greek and Italian stories the subject of quarrel between nephew and uncles is the skin of a boar, which the nephew presented to his lady-love and which his uncles took from her.

restore the queen to life would be to smear her temples, breast, pulses, and nostrils with the blood of the dragon.¹ In a modern Roman version of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," the magician tells the princess whom he holds captive in a floating rock in mid-ocean that he will never die. The princess reports this to the prince her husband, who has come to rescue her. The prince replies, "It is impossible but that there should be some one thing or other that is fatal to him; ask him what that one fatal thing is." So the princess asked the magician, and he told her that in the wood was a hydra with seven heads; in the middle head of the hydra was a leveret, in the head of the leveret was a bird, in the bird's head was a precious stone, and if this stone were put under his pillow he would die. The prince procured the stone, and the princess laid it under the magician's pillow. No sooner did the enchanter lay his head on the pillow than he gave three terrible yells, turned himself round and round three times, and died.² Another Italian tale sets forth how a great cloud, which was really a fairy, used to receive a young girl as tribute every year from a certain city; and the inhabitants had to give the girls up, for if they did not, the cloud would throw things at them and kill them all. One year it fell to the lot of the king's daughter to be handed over to the cloud, and they took her in procession, to the roll of muffled drums, and attended by her weeping father and mother, to the top of a mountain, and left her sitting in a chair there all alone. Then the fairy cloud came down on the top of the mountain, set the princess in her lap, and began to suck her blood out of her little finger; for it was on the blood of girls that this wicked fairy lived. When the poor princess was faint with the loss of blood and lay like a log, the cloud carried her away up to her fairy palace in the sky. But a brave youth had seen all that happened from behind a bush, and no sooner did the fairy spirit away the princess to her palace than he turned himself into an eagle and flew after them. He lighted on a tree just outside the palace, and looking in at the window he beheld a room full of young girls all in

¹ Basile, *Pentamerone*, ii. 60 sq. (Liebrecht's German trans.).

² R. 11. Busk, *Folk-lore of Rome*, p. 164 sqq.

bed; for these were the victims of former years whom the fairy cloud had half killed by sucking their blood; yet they called her mamma. When the fairy went away and left the girls, the brave young man had food drawn up for them by ropes, and he told them to ask the fairy how she might be killed and what was to become of them when she died. It was a delicate question, but the fairy answered it, saying, "I shall never die." However, when the girls pressed her, she took them out on a terrace and said, "Do you see yonder mountain afar off? On that mountain is a tigress with seven heads. If you wish me to die, a lion must fight that tigress and tear off all her seven heads. In her body is an egg, and if anybody hits me with that egg in the middle of my forehead, I shall die. But if the egg falls into my hands, the tigress will come to life again, resume her seven heads, and I shall live." When the young girls heard this they pretended to be glad and said, "Good! certainly our mamma can never die," but naturally they were discouraged. However, when she went away again, they told it all to the young man, and he bade them have no fear. Away he went to the mountain, turned himself into a lion, and fought the tigress. Meantime the fairy came home, saying, "Alas! I feel ill!" For six days the fight went on, the young man tearing off one of the tigress's heads each day, and each day the strength of the fairy kept ebbing away. Then after allowing himself two days' rest the hero tore off the seventh head and secured the egg, but not till it had rolled into the sea and been brought back to him by a friendly dog-fish. When he returned to the fairy with the egg in his hand, she begged and prayed him to give it her, but he made her first restore the young girls to health and send them away in handsome carriages. When she had done so, he struck her on the forehead with the egg, and she fell down dead.¹ Similarly in a story from the western Riviera a sorcerer called Body-without-Soul can only be killed by means of an egg which is in an eagle, which is in a dog, which is in a

¹ Crane, *Popular Italian Tales*, pp. 31-34. The hero had acquired the power of turning himself into an eagle, a lion, and an ant from three creatures of these sorts whose quarrel about their

shares in a dead ass he had composed. This incident occurs in other tales of the same type. See below, pp. 363, 365, 368 note 3, 369, 370, 374, 375, 381.

lion; and the egg must be broken on the sorcerer's forehead. The hero, who achieves the adventure, has received the power of changing himself into a lion, a dog, an eagle, or an ant from four creatures of these sorts among whom he had fairly divided the carcass of a dead ass.¹

Stories of the same sort are current among Slavonic peoples. Thus in a Russian tale a warlock called Koshchei the Deathless is asked where his death is. "My death," he answered, "is in such and such a place. There stands an oak, and under the oak is a casket, and in the casket is a hare, and in the hare is a duck, and in the duck is an egg, and in the egg is my death." A prince obtained the egg and squeezed it, whereupon Koshchei the Deathless bent double. But when the prince shivered the egg in pieces the warlock died.² "In one of the descriptions of Koshchei's death, he is said to be killed by a blow on the forehead inflicted by the mysterious egg—that last link in the magic chain by which his life is darkly bound. In another version of the same story, but told of a snake, the fatal blow is struck by a small stone found in the yolk of an egg, which is inside a duck, which is inside a hare, which is inside a stone, which is on an island."³ In another variant the prince shifts the fatal egg from one hand to the other, and as he does so Koshchei rushes wildly from side to side of the room. At last the prince smashes the egg, and Koshchei drops dead.⁴ In another Russian story the death of an enchantress is in a blue rose-tree in a blue forest. Prince Ivan uproots the rose-tree, whereupon the enchantress straightway sickens. He brings the rose-tree to her house and finds her at the point of death. Then he throws it into the cellar, crying, "Behold her death!" and at once the whole building shakes, "and becomes an island, on which are people who had been

¹ J. B. Andrews, *Contes Lignés* (Paris, 1892), No. 46, p. 213 sqq. In a parallel Sicilian story the hero Bepino slays a sorcerer in the same manner after he had received from an eagle, a lion, and an ant the same gift of transformation in return for the same service. See G. Pirri, *Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti popolari Siciliani*, ii. 215; and for another Sicilian parallel, Con-

zenhach, *Sicilianische Märchen*, No. 6, pp. 34-38.

² Kilston, *Russian Folk-tales*, p. 103 sq.; Dietrich, *Russian Popular Tales*, p. 23 sq.; J. Curlin, *Myths and Folk-tales of the Russians, Western Slavs, and Magyars*, p. 119 sqq.

³ Kilston, *op. cit.* p. 109.

⁴ *Ibid.*

sitting in Hell, and who offer up thanks to Prince Ivan."¹ In another Russian story a prince is grievously tormented by a witch who has got hold of his heart, and keeps it seething in a magic cauldron.² In a Bohemian tale a warlock's strength lies in an egg which is in a duck, which is in a stag, which is under a tree. A seer finds the egg and sucks it. Then the warlock grows as weak as a child, "for all his strength had passed into the seer."³ In a Serbian story a fabulous being called True Steel declares, "Far away from this place there is a very high mountain, in the mountain there is a fox, in the fox there is a heart, in the heart there is a bird, and in this bird is my strength." The fox is caught and killed and its heart is taken out. Out of the fox's heart is taken the bird, which is then burnt, and that very moment True Steel falls dead.⁴ In a South Slavonian story a dragon tells an old woman, "My strength is a long way off, and you cannot go thither. Far in another empire under the emperor's city is a lake, in that lake is a dragon, and in the dragon a boar, and in the boar a pigeon, and in that is my strength."⁵

Amongst peoples of the Teutonic stock stories of the external soul are not wanting. In a tale told by the Saxons of Transylvania it is said that a young man shot at a witch again and again. The bullets went clean through her but did her no harm, and she only laughed and mocked at him. "Silly earthworm," she cried, "shoot as much as you like. It does me no harm. For know that my life resides not in me but far, far away. In a mountain is a pond, on the pond swims a duck, in the duck is an egg, in the egg burns a light, that light is my life. If you could put out that light, my life would be at an end. But that can never, never be." However, the young man got hold of the egg, smashed it, and put out the light, and with it the witch's life went out also.⁶ In this last story, as in many other stories of the same

¹ Kalston, *op. cit.* p. 113 sq.

² *Id.*, p. 114.

³ *Id.*, p. 110.

⁴ Mijatovics, *Serbian Folk-lore*, edited by the Rev. W. Denton, p. 172; F. S. Krauss, *Sagen und Märchen der Südslaven*, i. 168 sq. (No. 34).

⁵ A. H. Wratislaw, *Sixty Folk-tales from exclusively Slavonic sources* (London, 1889), p. 225.

⁶ Haltrich, *Deutsche Volksmärchen aus dem Sachsenlande in Siebenbürgen*,⁴ No. 34 (No. 33 of the first ed.), p. 149 sq.

type, the hero achieves his adventure by the help of certain grateful animals whom he had met and done a service to on his travels. The same incident occurs in another German tale of this class which runs thus. Once upon a time there was a young fellow called Body-without-Soul, or, for short, Soulless, and he was a cannibal who would eat nothing but young girls. Now it was a custom in that country that the girls drew lots every year, and the one on whom the lot fell was handed over to Soulless. In time it happened that the lot fell on the king's daughter. The king was exceedingly sorry, but what could he do? Law was law, and had to be obeyed. So they took the princess to the castle where Soulless resided; and he shut her up in the larder and fattened her for his dinner. But a brave soldier undertook to rescue her, and off he set for the cannibal's castle. Well, as he trudged along, what should he see but a fly, an eagle, a bear, and a lion sitting in a field by the side of the road, and quarrelling about their shares in a dead horse. So he divided the carcass fairly between them, and as a reward the fly and the eagle bestowed on him the power of changing himself at will into either of their shapes. That evening he made himself into an eagle, and flew up a high tree; there he looked about, but could see nothing but trees. Next morning he flew on till he came to a great castle, and at the gate was a big black board with these words chalked up on it: "Mr. Soulless lives here." When the soldier read that he was glad, and changed himself into a fly, and flew buzzing from window to window, looking in at every one till he came to the one where the fair princess sat a prisoner. He introduced himself at once and said, "I am come to free you, but first you must learn where the soul of Soulless really is." "I don't know," replied the princess, "but I will ask." So after much coaxing and entreaty she learned that the soul of Soulless was in a box, and that the box was on a rock in the middle of the Red Sea. When the soldier heard that, he turned himself into an eagle again, flew to the Red Sea, and came back with the soul of Soulless in the box. Arrived at the castle he knocked and banged at the door as if the house was on fire. Soulless did not know what was the matter, and he came down and

opened the door himself. When he saw the soldier standing at it, I can assure you he was in a towering rage. "What do you mean," he roared, "by knocking at my door like that? I'll gobble you up on the spot, skin and hair and all." But the soldier laughed in his face. "You'd better not do that," said he, "for here I've got your soul in the box." When the cannibal heard that, all his courage went down into the calves of his legs, and he begged and entreated the soldier to give him his soul. But the soldier would not hear of it; he opened the box, took out the soul, and flung it over his head; and that same instant down fell the cannibal, dead as a door-nail.¹

Another German story, which embodies the notion of the external soul in a somewhat different form, tells how once upon a time a certain king had three sons and a daughter, and for each of the king's four children there grew a flower in the king's garden, which was a life-flower; for it bloomed and flourished so long as the child lived, but drooped and withered away when the child died. Now the time came when the king's daughter married a rich man and went to live with him far away. But it was not long before her flower withered in the king's garden. So the eldest brother went forth to visit his brother-in-law and comfort him in his bereavement. But when he came to his brother-in-law's castle he saw the corpse of his murdered sister weltering on the ramparts. And his wicked brother-in-law set before him boiled human hands and feet for his dinner. And when the king's son refused to eat of them, his brother-in-law led him through many chambers to a murder-hole, where were all sorts of implements of murder, but especially a gallows, a wheel, and a pot of blood. Here he said to the prince, "You must die, but you may choose your kind of death." The prince chose to die on the gallows; and die he did even as he had said. So the eldest son's flower withered in the king's garden, and the second son went forth to learn the fate of his brother and sister. But it fared with him no better than with his elder brother, for he too died on the gallows in the murder-

¹ J. W. Wolf, *Deutsche Märchen und Sagen* (Leipzig, 1845), No. 20, pp. 87-93.

hole of his wicked brother-in-law's castle, and his flower also withered away in the king's garden at home. Now when the youngest son was also come to his brother-in-law's castle and saw the corpse of his murdered sister weltering on the ramparts, and the bodies of his two murdered brothers dangling from the gallows in the murder-hole, he said that for his part he had a fancy to die by the wheel, but he was not quite sure how the thing was done, and would his brother-in-law kindly show him? "Oh, it's quite easy," said his brother-in-law, "you just put your head in, so," and with that he popped his head through the middle of the wheel. "Just so," said the king's youngest son, and he gave the wheel a twirl, and as it spun round and round, the wicked brother-in-law died a painful death, which he richly deserved. And when he was quite dead, the murdered brothers and sister came to life again, and their withered flowers bloomed afresh in the king's garden.¹ In another German story an old warlock lives with a damsel all alone in the midst of a vast and gloomy wood. She fears that being old he may die and leave her alone in the forest. But he reassures her. "Dear child," he said, "I cannot die, and I have no heart in my breast." But she importuned him to tell her where his heart was. So he said, "Far, far from here in an unknown and lonesome land stands a great church. The church is well secured with iron doors, and round about it flows a broad deep moat. In the church flies a bird and in the bird is my heart. So long as that bird lives, I live. It cannot die of itself, and no one can catch it; therefore I cannot die, and you need have no anxiety." However the young man, whose bride the damsel was to have been before the warlock spirited her away, contrived to reach the church and catch the bird. He brought it to the damsel, who stowed him and it away under the warlock's bed. Soon the old warlock came home. He was ailing, and said so. The girl wept and said, "Alas, daddy is dying; he has a heart in his breast after all." "Child," replied the warlock, "hold your

¹ Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, ii. 306-308, § 622. In this story the flowers are rather life-tokens than

external souls. The life-token has been carefully studied by Mr. E. S. Hartland in the second volume of his *Legend of Persens*.

tongue. I *can't* die. It will soon pass over." At that the young man under the bed gave the bird a gentle squeeze; and as he did so, the old warlock felt very unwell and sat down. Then the young man gripped the bird tighter, and the warlock fell senseless from his chair. "Now squeeze him dead," cried the damsel. Her lover obeyed, and when the bird was dead, the old warlock also lay dead on the floor.¹

In the Norse tale of "the giant who had no heart in his body," the giant tells the captive princess, "Far, far away in a lake lies an island, on that island stands a church, in that church is a well, in that well swims a duck, in that duck there is an egg, and in that egg there lies my heart." The hero of the tale, with the help of some animals to whom he had been kind, obtains the egg and squeezes it, at which the giant screams piteously and begs for his life. But the hero breaks the egg in pieces and the giant at once bursts.² In another Norse story a hill-ogre tells the captive princess that she will never be able to return home unless she finds the grain of sand which lies under the ninth tongue of the ninth head of a certain dragon; but if that grain of sand were to come over the rock in which the ogres live, they would all burst "and the rock itself would become a gilded palace, and the lake green meadows." The hero finds the grain of sand and takes it to the top of the high rock in which the ogres live. So all the ogres burst and the rest falls out as one of the ogres had foretold.³ In a Danish tale a warlock carries off a princess to his wondrous subterranean palace; and when she anxiously inquires how long he is likely to live, he assures her that he will certainly survive her. "No man," he says, "can rob me of my life, for it is in my heart, and my heart is not here; it is in safer keeping." She urges him to tell her where it is, so he says:

¹ K. Müllenhoff, *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder der Herzogthümer Schleswig-Holstein und Lauenburg*, p. 404 sqq.

² Asbjørnsen og Moe, *Norske Folke-Eventyr*, No. 36; Dasent, *Popular Tales from the Norse*, p. 55 sqq.

³ Asbjørnsen og Moe, *Norske Folke-Eventyr*, Ny Samling, No. 70; Dasent, *Tales from the Fjeld*, p. 229 ("Boots

and the Beasts"). As in other tales of this type, it is said that the hero found three animals (a lion, a falcon, and an ant) quarrelling over a dead horse, and received from them the power of transforming himself into animals of these species as a reward for dividing the carcass fairly among them.

"Very far from here, in a land that is called Poland, there is a great lake, and in the lake is a dragon, and in the dragon is a hare, and in the hare is a duck, and in the duck is an egg, and in the egg is my heart. It is in good keeping, you may trust me. Nobody is likely to stumble upon it." However, the hero of the tale, who is also the husband of the kidnapped princess, has fortunately received the power of turning himself at will into a bear, a dog, an ant, or a falcon as a reward for having divided the carcass of a deer impartially between four animals of these species; and availing himself of this useful art he not only makes his way into the warlock's enchanted palace but also secures the egg on which the enchanter's life depends. No sooner has he smashed the egg on the enchanter's ugly face than that miscreant drops down as dead as a herring.¹ In an Icelandic parallel to the story of Meleager, the spæ-wives or sibyls come and foretell the high destiny of the infant Gestr as he lies in his cradle. Two candles were burning beside the child, and the youngest of the spæ-wives, conceiving herself slighted, cried out, "I foretell that the child shall live no longer than this candle burns." Whereupon the chief sibyl put out the candle and gave it to Gestr's mother to keep, charging her not to light it again until her son should wish to die. Gestr lived three hundred years; then he kindled the candle and expired.²

In a Celtic tale a giant says, "There is a great flagstone under the threshold. There is a wether under the flag. There is a duck in the wether's belly, and an egg in the belly of the duck, and it is in the egg that my soul is." The egg is crushed, and the giant falls down dead.³ In another Celtic tale, a sea beast has carried off a king's daughter, and an old smith declares that there is no way of killing the beast but one. "In the island that is in the midst of the loch is Eillid Chaisthion—the white-footed hind, of the slenderest legs, and the swiftest step, and, though she should be caught, there would spring a hoodie out of her, and though the hoodie should be caught, there would

¹ Grundtvig, *Dänische Volksmärchen*, übersetzt von A. Strodsmann, Zweite Sammlung (Leipzig, 1879), p. 194 sqq.

² Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen*,

p. 592; Jamieson, *Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, s.v. "Yule."

³ J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, i. 10 sq.

spring a trout out of her, but there is an egg in the mouth of the trout, and the soul of the beast is in the egg, and if the egg breaks, the beast is dead." As usual the egg is broken and the beast dies.¹

In these Celtic tales the helpful animals reappear and assist the hero in achieving the adventure, though for the sake of brevity I have omitted to describe the parts they play in the plot. They figure also in an Argyleshire story, which seems however to be of Irish origin; for the Cruachan of which we hear in it is not the rugged and lofty mountain Ben Cruachan which towers above the beautiful Loch Awe, but Roscommon Cruachan near Belanagare, the ancient palace of the kings of Connaught, long famous in Irish tradition.² The story relates how a big giant, King of Soreha, stole away the wife and the shaggy dun filly of the herdsman or king of Cruachan. So the herdsman baked a bannock to take with him by the way, and set off in quest of his wife and the filly. He went for a long, long time, till at last his soles were blackened and his cheeks were sunken, the yellow-headed birds were going to rest at the roots of the bushes and the tops of the thickets, and the dark clouds of night were coming and the clouds of day were departing; and he saw a house far from him, but though it was far from him he did not take long to reach it. He went in, and sat in the upper end of the house, but there was no one within; and the fire was newly kindled, the house newly swept, and the bed newly made; and who came in but the hawk of Glencuaich, and she said to him, "Are you here, young son of Cruachan?" "I am," said he. The hawk said to him, "Do you know who was here last night?" "I do not," said he. "There were here," said she, "the big giant, King of Soreha, your wife, and the shaggy dun filly; and the giant was threatening terribly that if he could get hold of you he would take the head off you." "I well believe it," said he. Then she gave him food and drink, and sent him to bed. She rose in the morning, made breakfast for him, and baked a bannock for him to take with him on his journey. And he went away

¹ J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, i. 80 sqq.

² See above, vol. i. p. 240, note 2.

and travelled all day, and in the evening he came to another house and went in, and was entertained by the green-headed duck, who told him that the giant had rested there the night before with the wife and shaggy dun filly of the herdsman of Cruachan. And next day the herdsman journeyed again, and at evening he came to another house and went in and was entertained by the fox of the scrubwood, who told him just what the hawk of Glencuaich and the green-headed duck had told him before. Next day the same thing happened, only it was the brown otter of the burn that entertained him at evening in a house where the fire was newly kindled, the floor newly swept, and the bed newly made. And next morning when he wakened, the first thing he saw was the hawk of Glencuaich, the green-headed duck, the fox of the scrubwood, and the brown otter of the burn all dancing together on the floor. They made breakfast for him, and partook of it all together, and said to him, "Should you be at any time in straits, think of us, and we will help you." Well, that very evening he came to the cave where the giant lived, and who was there before him but his own wife? She gave him food and hid him under clothes at the upper end of the cave. And when the giant came home he sniffed about and said, "The smell of a stranger is in the cave." But she said no, it was only a little bird she had roasted. "And I wish you would tell me," said she, "where you keep your life, that I might take good care of it." "It is in a grey stone over there," said he. So next day when he went away, she took the grey stone and dressed it well, and placed it in the upper end of the cave. When the giant came home in the evening he said to her, "What is it that you have dressed there?" "Your own life," said she, "and we must be careful of it." "I perceive that you are very fond of me, but it is not there," said he. "Where is it?" said she. "It is in a grey sheep on yonder hillside," said he. On the morrow, when he went away, she got the grey sheep, dressed it well, and placed it in the upper end of the cave. When he came home in the evening he said, "What is it that you have dressed there?" "Your own life, my love," said she. "It is not there as yet," said he. "Well!" said she, "you are

putting me to great trouble taking care of it, and you have not told me the truth these two times." He then said, "I think that I may tell it to you now. My life is below the feet of the big horse in the stable. There is a place down there in which there is a small lake. Over the lake are seven grey hides, and over the hides are seven sods from the heath, and under all these are seven oak planks. There is a trout in the lake, and a duck in the belly of the trout, an egg in the belly of the duck, and a thorn of blackthorn inside of the egg, and till that thorn is chewed small I cannot be killed. Whenever the seven grey hides, the seven sods from the heath, and the seven oak planks are touched I shall feel it wherever I shall be. I have an axe above the door, and unless all these are cut through with one blow of it the lake will not be reached; and when it will be reached I shall feel it." Next day, when the giant had gone out hunting on the hill, the herdsman of Cruachan contrived, with the help of the friendly animals—the hawk, the duck, the fox, and the otter—to get possession of the fateful thorn and to chew it before the giant could reach him; and no sooner had he done so than the giant dropped stark and stiff, a corpse.¹

Another Highland story sets forth how Hugh, prince of Lochlin, was long held captive by a giant who lived in a cave overlooking the Sound of Mull. At last, after he had spent many years of captivity in that dismal cave, it came to pass that one night the giant and his wife had a great dispute, and Hugh overheard their talk, and learned that the giant's soul was in a precious gem which he always wore on his forehead. So the prince watched his opportunity, seized the gem, and having no means of escape or concealment, hastily swallowed it. Like lightning from the clouds, the giant's sword flashed from its scabbard and flew between Hugh's head and his body to intercept the gem before it could descend into the prince's stomach. But it was too late; and the giant fell down, sword in hand, and expired without a gasp. Hugh had now lost his head, it is true, but having the giant's soul in his body he felt none the worse for the accident. So he buckled the giant's sword at

¹ D. MacInnes, *Folk and Hero Tales* (London, 1890), pp. 103-121.

his side, mounted the grey filly, swifter than the east wind, that never had a bridle, and rode home. But the want of his head made a painful impression on his friends; indeed they maintained that he was a ghost and shut the door in his face, so now he wanders for ever in shades of darkness, riding the grey filly fleetlier than the wind. On stormy nights, when the winds howl about the gables and among the trees, you may see him galloping along the shore of the sea "between wave and sand." Many a naughty little boy, who would not go quietly to bed, has been carried off by Headless Hugh on his grey filly and never seen again.¹

In Sutherlandshire at the present day there is a sept of Mackays known as "the descendants of the seal," who claim to be sprung from a mermaid, and the story they tell in explanation of their claim involves the notion of the external soul. They say that the laird of Borgie used to go down to the rocks under his castle to bathe. One day he saw a mermaid close in shore, combing her hair and swimming about, as if she were anxious to land. After watching her for a time, he noticed her cowl on the rocks beside him, and knowing that she could not go to sea without it, he carried the cowl up to the castle in the hope that she would follow him. She did so, but he refused to give up the cowl and detained the sea-maiden herself and made her his wife. To this she consented with great reluctance, and told him her life was bound up with the cowl, and if it rotted or was destroyed she would instantly die. So the cowl was placed for safety in the middle of a great hay-stack, and there it lay for years. One unhappy day, when the laird was from home, the servants were working among the hay and found the cowl. Not knowing what it was, they showed it to the lady of the house. The sight revived memories of her old life in the depths of the sea, so she took the cowl, and leaving her child in its cot, plunged into the sea and never came home to Borgie any more. Only sometimes she would swim close in shore to see her boy, and then she wept because he was not of her own kind that she might

¹ J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth*, his youth a certain old Betty Miles used to terrify him with this tale.
p. 187 sq. The writer tells us that in

take him to sea with her. The boy grew to be a man, and his descendants are famous swimmers. They cannot drown, and to this day they are known in the neighbourhood as *Sliocht an roin*, that is, "the descendants of the seal."¹

In an Irish story we read how a giant kept a beautiful damsel a prisoner in his castle on the top of a hill, which was white with the bones of the champions who had tried in vain to rescue the fair captive. At last the hero, after hewing and slashing at the giant all to no purpose, discovered that the only way to kill him was to rub a mole on the giant's right breast with a certain egg, which was in a duck, which was in a chest, which lay locked and bound at the bottom of the sea. With the help of some obliging salmon, rams, and eagles, the hero as usual makes himself master of the precious egg and slays the giant by merely striking it against the mole on his right breast.² Similarly in a Breton story there figures a giant whom neither fire nor water nor steel can harm. He tells his seventh wife, whom he has just married after murdering all her predecessors, "I am immortal, and no one can hurt me unless he crushes on my breast an egg, which is in a pigeon, which is in the belly of a hare; this hare is in the belly of a wolf, and this wolf is in the belly of my brother, who dwells a thousand leagues from here. So I am quite easy on that score." A soldier, the hero of the tale, had been of service to an ant, a wolf, and a sea-bird, who in return bestowed on him the power of turning himself into an ant, a wolf, or a sea-bird at will. By means of this magical power the soldier contrived to obtain the egg and crush it on the breast of the giant, who immediately expired.³ Another Breton story tells of a giant who was called Body-without-Soul because his life did not reside in his body. He himself dwelt in a beautiful castle which hung between heaven and earth, suspended by four golden chains; but his life was in an egg, and the egg was in a dove, and the dove was in a hare, and the hare was in a wolf, and the wolf was in an iron chest at

¹ J. Macdonald, *op. cit.* p. 191 sq., from information furnished by the Rev. A. Mackay.

Ireland, p. 71 sqq.

² Sébillot, *Contes populaires de la Haute-Bretagne* (Paris, 1885), p.

³ J. Curtin, *Myths and Folk-tales of* 63 sqq.

the bottom of the sea. In his castle in the air he kept prisoner a beautiful princess whom he had swooped down upon and carried off in a magic chariot. But her lover turned himself into an ant and so climbed up one of the golden chains into the enchanted castle, for he had done a kindness to the king and queen of ants, and they rewarded him by transforming him into an ant in his time of need. When he had learned from the captive princess the secret of the giant's life, he procured the chest from the bottom of the sea by the help of the king of fishes, whom he had also obliged; and opening the chest he killed first the wolf, then the hare, and then the dove, and at the death of each animal the giant grew weaker and weaker as if he had lost a limb. In the stomach of the dove the hero found the egg on which the giant's life depended, and when he came with it to the castle he found Body-without-Soul stretched on his bed at the point of death. So he dashed the egg against the giant's forehead, the egg broke, and the giant straightway expired.¹ In another Breton tale the life of a giant resides in an old box-tree which grows in his castle garden; and to kill him it is necessary to sever the tap-root of the tree at a single blow of an axe without injuring any of the lesser roots. This task the hero, as usual, successfully accomplishes, and at the same moment the giant drops dead.²

The notion of an external soul has now been traced in folk-tales told by Aryan peoples from India to Brittany and the Hebrides. We have still to show that the same idea occurs commonly in the popular stories of peoples who do not belong to the Aryan stock. In the first place it appears in the ancient Egyptian story of "The Two Brothers." This story was written down in the reign of Rameses II., about 1300 B.C.

¹ F. M. Luzel, *Contes populaires de Basse-Bretagne* (Paris, 1887), i. 435-449. Compare *id.*, *Veillées Bretonnes* (Morlaix, 1879), p. 133 sq. For two other French stories of the same type, taken down in Lorraine, see Cosquin, *Contes populaires de Lorraine*, Nos. 15 and 50 (vol. i. p. 166 sqq., vol. ii. p. 128 sqq.). In both of them there figures a miraculous beast which can only be slain by breaking a certain egg against

its head; but we are not told that the life of the beast was in the egg. In both of them also the hero receives from three animals, whose dispute about the carcass of a dead beast he has settled, the power of changing himself into animals of the same sort. See the remarks and comparisons of Cosquin, *op. cit.* i. 170 sqq.

² Luzel, *Veillées Bretonnes*, p. 127 sqq.

It is therefore older than our present redaction of Homer, and far older than the Bible. The outline of the story, so far as it concerns us here, is as follows. Once upon a time there were two brethren; the name of the elder was Anpu and the name of the younger was Bata. Now Anpu had a house and a wife, and his younger brother dwelt with him as his servant. It was Anpu who made the garments, and every morning when it grew light he drove the kine afield. As he walked behind them they used to say to him, "The grass is good in such and such a place," and he heard what they said and led them to the good pasture that they desired. So his kine grew very sleek and multiplied greatly. One day when the two brothers were at work in the field the elder brother said to the younger, "Run and fetch seed from the village." So the younger brother ran and said to the wife of his elder brother, "Give me seed that I may run to the field, for my brother sent me saying, Tarry not." She said, "Go to the barn and take as much as thou wouldst." He went and filled a jar full of wheat and barley, and came forth bearing it on his shoulders. When the woman saw him her heart went out to him, and she laid hold of him and said, "Come, let us rest an hour together." But he said, "Thou art to me as a mother, and my brother is to me as a father." So he would not hearken to her, but took the load on his back and went away to the field. In the evening, when the elder brother was returning from the field, his wife feared for what she had said. So she took soot and made herself as one who has been beaten. And when her husband came home, she said, "When thy younger brother came to fetch seed, he said to me, Come, let us rest an hour together. But I would not, and he beat me." Then the elder brother became like a panther of the south; he sharpened his knife and stood behind the door of the cow-house. And when the sun set and the younger brother came laden with all the herbs of the field, as was his wont every day, the cow that walked in front of the herd said to him, "Behold, thine elder brother stands with a knife to kill thee. Flee before him." When he heard what the cow said, he looked under the door of the cow-house and saw the feet of his elder brother standing behind the door, his

knife in his hand. So he fled and his brother pursued him with the knife. But the younger brother cried for help to the Sun, and the Sun heard him and caused a great water to spring up between him and his elder brother, and the water was full of crocodiles. The two brothers stood, the one on the one side of the water and the other on the other, and the younger brother told the elder brother all that had befallen. So the elder brother repented him of what he had done and he lifted up his voice and wept. But he could not come at the farther bank by reason of the crocodiles. His younger brother called to him and said, "Go home and tend the cattle thyself. For I will dwell no more in the place where thou art. I will go to the Valley of the Acacia. But this is what thou shalt do for me. Thou shalt come and care for me, if evil befalls me, for I will enchant my heart and place it on the top of the flower of the Acacia; and if they cut the Acacia and my heart falls to the ground, thou shalt come and seek it, and when thou hast found it thou shalt lay it in a vessel of fresh water. Then I shall come to life again. But this is the sign that evil has befallen me; the pot of beer in thine hand shall bubble." So he went away to the Valley of the Acacia, but his brother returned home with dust on his head and slew his wife and cast her to the dogs.

For many days afterwards the younger brother dwelt alone in the Valley of the Acacia. By day he hunted the beasts of the field, but at evening he came and laid him down under the Acacia, on the top of whose flower was his heart. And many days after that he built himself a house in the Valley of the Acacia. But the gods were grieved for him; and the Sun said to Khnumu, "Make a wife for Bata, that he may not dwell alone." So Khnumu made him a woman to dwell with him, who was perfect in her limbs more than any woman on earth, for all the gods were in her. So she dwelt with him. But one day a lock of her hair fell into the river and floated down to the land of Egypt, to the house of Pharaoh's washerwomen. The fragrance of the lock perfumed Pharaoh's raiment, and the washerwomen were blamed, for it was said, "An odour of perfume in the garments of Pharaoh!" So the heart of

Pharaoh's chief washerman was weary of the complaints that were made every day, and he went to the wharf, and there in the water he spied the lock of hair. He sent one down into the river to fetch it, and, because it smelt sweetly, he took it to Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh's magicians were sent for and they said, "This lock of hair belongs to a daughter of the Sun, who has in her the essence of all the gods. Let messengers go forth to all foreign lands to seek her." So the woman was brought from the Valley of the Acacia with chariots and archers and much people, and all the land of Egypt rejoiced at her coming, and Pharaoh loved her. But when they asked her of her husband, she said to Pharaoh, "Let them cut down the Acacia and let them destroy it." So men were sent with tools to cut down the Acacia. They came to it and cut the flower upon which was the heart of Bata; and he fell down dead in that evil hour. But the next day, when the earth grew light and the elder brother of Bata was entered into his house and had sat down, they brought him a pot of beer and it bubbled, and they gave him a jug of wine and it grew turbid. Then he took his staff and his sandals and hied him to the Valley of the Acacia, and there he found his younger brother lying dead in his bouse. So he sought for the heart of his brother under the Acacia. For three years he sought in vain, but in the fourth year he found it in the berry of the Acacia. So he threw the heart into a cup of fresh water. And when it was night and the heart had sucked in much water, Bata shook in all his limbs and revived. Then he drank the cup of water in which his heart was, and his heart went into its place, and he lived as before.¹

In the *Arabian Nights* we read how Scyf el-Mulook, after wandering for four months over mountains and hills and deserts, came to a lofty palace in which he found the lovely daughter of the King of India sitting alone on a golden couch in a hall spread with silken carpets. She tells

¹ Maspero, *Contes populaires de l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris, 1882), p. 5 sqq.; Flinders Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, Second Series (London, 1895), p. 36

sqq. Compare W. Mannhardt, "Das älteste Märchen," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iv. (1859), pp. 232-259.

him that she is held captive by a jinnee, who had swooped down on her and carried her off while she was disporting herself with her female slaves in a tank in the great garden of her father the king. Seyf el-Mulook then offers to smite the jinnee with the sword and slay him. "But," she replied, "thou canst not slay him unless thou kill his soul." "And in what place," said he, "is his soul?" She answered, "I asked him respecting it many times; but he would not confess to me its place. It happened, however, that I urged him, one day, and he was enraged against me, and said to me, 'How often wilt thou ask me respecting my soul? What is the reason of thy question respecting my soul?' So I answered him, 'O Hâtîm, there remaineth to me no one but thee, excepting God; and I, as long as I live, would not cease to hold thy soul in my embrace; and if I do not take care of thy soul, and put it in the midst of my eye, how can I live after thee? If I know thy soul, I would take care of it as of my right eye.' And thereupon he said to me, 'When I was born, the astrologers declared that the destruction of my soul would be effected by the hand of one of the sons of the human kings. I therefore took my soul, and put it into the crop of a sparrow, and I imprisoned the sparrow in a little box, and put this into another small box, and this I put within seven other small boxes, and I put these within seven chests, and the chests I put into a coffer of marble within the verge of this eireumambient ocean; for this part is remote from the countries of mankind, and none of mankind can gain access to it.'" But Seyf el-Mulook got possession of the sparrow and strangled it, and the jinnee fell upon the ground a heap of black ashes.¹ In a modern Arabian tale a king marries an ogress, who puts out the eyes of the king's forty wives. One of the blinded queens gives birth to a son whom she names Mohammed the Prudent. But the ogress queen hated him and compassed his death. So she sent him on an errand to the house of her kinsfolk the ogres. In the house of the ogres he saw some things hanging from the roof, and on asking a female slave what they were, she said, "That is the bottle which contains the life of my lady the queen, and the other bottle beside it

¹ Lane's *Arabian Nights* (London, 1841), iii. 339 sqq.

contains the eyes of the queens whom my mistress blinded." A little afterwards he spied a beetle and rose to kill it. "Don't kill it," cried the slave, "for that is my life." But Mohammed the Prudent watched the beetle till it entered a chink in the wall; and when the female slave had fallen asleep, he killed the beetle in its hole, and so the slave died. Then Mohammed took down the two bottles and carried them home to his father's palace. There he presented himself before the ogress queen and said, "See, I have your life in my hand, but I will not kill you till you have replaced the eyes which you took from the forty queens." The ogress did as she was bid, and then Mohammed the Prudent said, "There, take your life." But the bottle slipped from his hand and fell, the life of the ogress escaped from it, and she died.¹

A Basque story, which closely resembles some of the stories told among Aryan peoples, relates how a monster—a Body-without-Soul—detains a princess in captivity, and is questioned by her as to how he might be slain. With some reluctance he tells her, "You must kill a terrible wolf which is in the forest, and inside him is a fox, in the fox is a

¹ G. Spitta - Bey, *Contes arabes modernes* (Leyden and Paris, 1883), No. 2, p. 12 sqq. The story in its main outlines is identical with the Cashmeer story of "The Ogress Queen" (J. H. Knowles, *Folk-tales of Kashmir*, p. 42 sqq.) and the Bengalee story of "The Boy whom Seven Mothers Suckled" (Lal Behari Day, *Folk-tales of Bengal*, p. 117 sqq.; *Indian Antiquary*, i. 170 sqq.). In another Arabian story the life of a witch is bound up with a phial; when it is broken, she dies (W. A. Clouston, *A Group of Eastern Romances and Stories*, p. 30). A similar incident occurs in a Cashmeer story (Knowles, *op. cit.* p. 73). In the Arabian story mentioned in the text, the hero, by a genuine touch of local colour, is made to drink the milk of an ogress's breasts and hence is regarded by her as her son. The same incident occurs in Kabyl and Berber tales. See J. Rivière, *Contes populaires de la Kabylie du Djurdjura* (Paris, 1882), p. 239; R. Basset,

Nouveaux Contes Berbères (Paris, 1897), p. 128, with the editor's note, p. 339 sqq. In a Mongolian story a king refuses to kill a lad because he has unwittingly partaken of a cake kneaded with the milk of the lad's mother (Jülg, *Mongolische Märchen-Sammlung, die neun Märchen des Siddhi-Kür*, p. 183). Cp. W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 149; and for the same mode of creating kinship among other races, see D'Abbadie, *Deux ans dans la Haute Ethiopie*, p. 272 sq.; Tausch, "Notices of the Circassians," *Journ. Royal Asiatic Soc.* i. (1834), p. 104; Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*, pp. 77, 83 (cp. Leitner, *Languages and Races of Dardistan*, p. 34); Denzil Ibbetson, *Settlement Report of the Panipat, Tahsil, and Karnal Parganah of the Karnal District*, p. 101; Moura, *Royaume du Cambodge*, i. 427; F. S. Krauss, *Sitte und Branch der Südslaven*, p. 14.

pigeon; this pigeon has an egg in his head, and whoever should strike me on the forehead with this egg would kill me." The hero of the story, by name Malbrouk, has learned, in the usual way, the art of turning himself at will into a wolf, an ant, a hawk, or a dog, and on the strength of this accomplishment he kills the animals, one after the other, and extracts the precious egg from the pigeon's head. When the wolf is killed, the monster feels it and says despondently, "I do not know if anything is going to happen to me. I am much afraid of it." When the fox and the pigeon have been killed, he cries that it is all over with him, that they have taken the egg out of the pigeon, and that he knows not what is to become of him. Finally the princess strikes the monster on the forehead with the egg, and he falls a corpse.¹ In a Kabyl story an ogre declares that his fate is far away in an egg, which is in a pigeon, which is in a camel, which is in the sea. The hero procures the egg and crushes it between his hands, and the ogre dies.² In a Magyar folk-tale, an old witch detains a young prince called Ambrose in the bowels of the earth. At last she confided to him that she kept a wild boar in a silken meadow, and if it were killed, they would find a hare inside, and inside the hare a pigeon, and inside the pigeon a small box, and inside the box one black and one shining beetle: the shining beetle held her life, and the black one held her power; if these two beetles died, then her life would come to an end also. When the old hag went out, Ambrose killed the wild boar, took out the hare, from the hare he took the pigeon, from the pigeon the box, and from the box the two beetles; he killed the black beetle, but kept the shining one alive. So the witch's power left her immediately, and when she came home, she had to take to her bed. Having learned from her how to escape from his prison to the upper air, Ambrose killed the shining beetle, and the old hag's spirit left her at once.³

¹ W. Webster, *Basque Legends* (London, 1877), p. 80 sqq.; J. Vinson, *Le folk-lore du pays Basque* (Paris, 1883), p. 84 sqq. As so often in tales of this type, the hero is said to have received his wonderful powers of metamorphosis from animals whom he found

quarrelling about their shares in a dead beast.

² Rivièrè, *Contes populaires de la Kabylie du Djurdjura*, p. 191.

³ W. H. Jones and L. L. Kropf, *The Folk-tales of the Magyar* (London, 1889), p. 205 sq.

In another Hungarian story the safety of the Dwarf-king resides in a golden cockchafer, inside a golden cock, inside a golden sheep, inside a golden stag, in the ninety-ninth island. The hero overcomes all these golden animals and so recovers his bride, whom the Dwarf-king had carried off.¹

A Lapp story tells of a giant who slew a man and took away his wife. When the man's son grew up, he tried to rescue his mother and kill the giant, but fire and sword were powerless to harm the monster; it seemed as if he had no life in his body. "Dear mother," at last inquired the son, "don't you know where the giant has hidden away his life?" The mother did not know, but promised to ask. So one day, when the giant chanced to be in a good humour, she asked him where he kept his life. He said to her, "Out yonder on a burning sea is an island, in the island is a barrel, in the barrel is a sheep, in the sheep is a hen, in the hen is an egg, and in the egg is my life." When the woman's son heard this, he hired a bear, a wolf, a hawk, and a diver-bird and set off in a boat to sail to the island in the burning sea. He sat with the hawk and the diver-bird under an iron tent in the middle of the boat, and he set the bear and the wolf to row. That is why to this day the bear's hair is dark brown and the wolf has dark brown spots; for as they sat at the oars without any screen they were naturally scorched by the tossing tongues of flame on the burning sea. However, they made their way over the fiery billows to the island, and there they found the barrel. In a trice the bear had knocked the bottom out of it with his claws, and forth sprang a sheep. But the wolf soon pulled the sheep down and rent it in pieces. From out the sheep flew a hen, but the hawk stooped on it and tore it with his talons. In the hen was an egg, which dropped into the sea and sank; but the diver-bird dived after it. Twice he dived after it in vain and came up to the surface gasping and spluttering; but the third time he brought up the egg and handed it to the young man. Great was the young man's joy. At once he kindled a great bonfire on the shore, threw the egg into it, and rowed away back across the sea. On landing he went away straight to the giant's abode, and found the monster burning just as he had left the

¹ R. H. Busk, *The Folk-lore of Rome*, p. 168.

egg burning on the island. "Fool that I was," lamented the dying giant, "to betray my life to a wicked old woman," and with that he snatched at an iron tube through which in happier days he had been wont to suck the blood of his human victims. But the woman was too subtle for him, for she had taken the precaution of inserting one end of the tube in the glowing embers of the hearth; and so, when the giant sucked hard at the other end, he imbibed only fire and ashes. Thus he burned inside as well as outside, and when the fire went out the giant's life went out with it.¹

A Samoyed story tells how seven warlocks killed a certain man's mother and carried off his sister, whom they kept to serve them. Every night when they came home the seven warlocks used to take out their hearts and place them in a dish, which the woman hung on the tent-poles. But the wife of the man whom they had wronged stole the hearts of the warlocks while they slept, and took them to her husband. By break of day he went with the hearts to the warlocks, and found them at the point of death. They all begged for their hearts; but he threw six of their hearts to the ground, and six of the warlocks died. The seventh and eldest warlock begged hard for his heart, and the man said, "You killed my mother. Make her alive again, and I will give you back your heart." The warlock said to his wife, "Go to the place where the dead woman lies. You will find a bag there. Bring it to me. The woman's spirit is in the bag." So his wife brought the bag; and the warlock said to the man, "Go to your dead mother, shake the bag and let the spirit breathe over her bones; so she will come to life again." The man did as he was bid, and his mother was restored to life. Then he hurled the seventh heart to the ground, and the seventh warlock died.² In a Kalmuck tale we read how a certain khan challenged a wise man to show his skill by stealing a precious stone on which the khan's life depended. The sage contrived to purloin the talisman while the khan and his guards slept; but not content with

¹ F. Liebrecht, "Lappländische Märchen," *Germania*, N.R., iii. (1870), p. 174 sq.; Poestion, *Lappländische Märchen* (Vienna, 1886), No. 20,

p. 81 sqq.

² Castren, *Ethnologische Vorlesungen über die altaischen Völker*, p. 173 sqq.

this he gave a further proof of his dexterity by bonneting the slumbering potentate with a bladder. This was too much for the khan. Next morning he informed the sage that he could overlook everything else, but that the indignity of being bonneted with a bladder was more than he could stand; and he ordered his facetious friend to instant execution. Pained at this exhibition of royal ingratitude, the sage dashed to the ground the talisman which he still held in his hand; and at the same instant blood flowed from the nostrils of the khan, and he gave up the ghost.¹

In a Tartar poem two heroes named Ak Molot and Bulat engage in mortal combat. Ak Molot pierces his foe through and through with an arrow, grapples with him, and dashes him to the ground, but all in vain, Bulat could not die. At last when the combat has lasted three years, a friend of Ak Molot sees a golden casket hanging by a white thread from the sky, and bethinks him that perhaps this casket contains Bulat's soul. So he shot through the white thread with an arrow, and down fell the casket. He opened it, and in the casket sat ten white birds, and one of the birds was Bulat's soul. Bulat wept when he saw that his soul was found in the casket. But one after the other the birds were killed, and then Ak Molot easily slew his foe.² In another Tartar poem, two brothers going to fight two other brothers take out their souls and hide them in the form of a white herb with six stalks in a deep pit. But one of their foes sees them doing so and digs up their souls, which he puts into a golden ram's horn, and then sticks the ram's horn in his quiver. The two warriors whose souls have thus been stolen know that they have no chance of victory, and accordingly make peace with their enemies.³ In another Tartar poem a terrible demon sets all the gods and heroes at defiance. At last a valiant youth fights the demon, binds him hand and foot, and slices him with his sword. But still the demon is not slain. So the youth asked him, "Tell me, where is your soul hidden? For if your soul had been hidden in your body, you must have been dead long ago." The demon

¹ B. Jüllg, *Kalmückische Märchen*, No. 12, p. 58 sqq.

² Schiefner, *Heldensagen der Minus-*

sinschen Tataren (St. Petersburg, 1859), pp. 172-176.

³ Schiefner, *op. cit.* pp. 108-112.

replied, "On the saddle of my horse is a bag. In the bag is a serpent with twelve heads. In the serpent is my soul. When you have killed the serpent, you have killed me also." So the youth took the saddle-bag from the horse and killed the twelve-headed serpent, whereupon the demon expired.¹ In another Tartar poem a hero called K  k Chan deposits with a maiden a golden ring, in which is half his strength. Afterwards when K  k Chan is wrestling long with a hero and cannot kill him, a woman drops into his mouth the ring which contains half his strength. Thus inspired with fresh force he slays his enemy.²

In a Mongolian story the hero Joro gets the better of his enemy the lama Tschoridong in the following way. The lama, who is an enchanter, sends out his soul in the form of a wasp to sting Joro's eyes. But Joro catches the wasp in his hand, and by alternately shutting and opening his hand he causes the lama alternately to lose and recover consciousness.³ In a Tartar poem two youths cut open the body of an old witch and tear out her bowels, but all to no purpose, she still lives. On being asked where her soul is, she answers that it is in the middle of her shoe-sole in the form of a seven-headed speckled snake. So one of the youths slices her shoe-sole with his sword, takes out the speckled snake, and cuts off its seven heads. Then the witch dies.⁴ Another Tartar poem describes how the hero Kartaga grappled with the Swan-woman. Long they wrestled. Moons waxed and waned and still they wrestled; years came and went, and still the struggle went on. But the piebald horse and the black horse knew that the Swan-woman's soul was not in her. Under the black earth flow nine seas; where the seas meet and form one, the sea comes to the surface of the earth. At the mouth of the nine seas

¹ Schiefner, *op. cit.* pp. 360-364; Castren, *Vorlesungen   ber die finische Mythologie*, p. 186 sq.

² Schiefner, *op. cit.* pp. 189-193. In another Tartar poem (Schiefner, *op. cit.* p. 390 sq.) a boy's soul is shut up by his enemies in a box. While the soul is in the box, the boy is dead; when it is taken out, he is restored to life. In the same poem (p. 384) the soul of a horse is kept shut up in a box,

because it is feared the owner of the horse will become the greatest hero on earth. But these cases are, to some extent, the converse of those in the text.

³ Schott, "Ueber die Sage von Geser Chan," *Abhandlungen d. k  nigl. Akad. d. Wissenschaft. zu Berlin*, 1851, p. 269.

⁴ W. Radloff, *Proben der Volksliteratur der t  rkischen St  mme S  d-Sibiriens*, ii, 237 sq.

rises a rock of copper ; it rises to the surface of the ground, it rises up between heaven and earth, this rock of copper. At the foot of the copper rock is a black chest, in the black chest is a golden casket, and in the golden casket is the soul of the Swan-woman. Seven little birds are the soul of the Swan-woman ; if the birds are killed the Swan-woman will die straightway. So the horses ran to the foot of the copper rock, opened the black chest, and brought back the golden casket. Then the piebald horse turned himself into a bald-headed man, opened the golden casket, and cut off the heads of the seven birds. So the Swan-woman died.¹ In a Tartar story a chief called Tash Kan is asked where his soul is. He answers that there are seven great poplars, and under the poplars a golden well ; seven *Maralen* (?) come to drink the water of the well, and the belly of one of them trails on the ground ; in this *Maral* is the golden box, in the golden box is a silver box, in the silver box are seven quails, the head of one of the quails is golden and its tail silver ; that quail is Tash Kan's soul. The hero of the story gets possession of the seven quails and wrings the necks of six of them. Then Tash Kan comes running and begs the hero to let his soul go free. But the hero wrings the quail's neck, and Tash Kan drops dead.² In another Tartar poem the hero, pursuing his sister who has driven away his cattle, is warned to desist from the pursuit because his sister has carried away his soul in a golden sword and a golden arrow, and if he pursues her she will kill him by throwing the golden sword or shooting the golden arrow at him.³

A Malay poem relates how once upon a time in the city of Indrapoora there was a certain merchant who was rich and prosperous, but he had no children. One day as he walked with his wife by the river they found a baby girl, fair as an angel. So they adopted the child and called her Bidasari. The merchant caused a golden fish to be made, and into this fish he transferred the soul of his adopted daughter. Then he put the golden fish in a golden box full of water, and hid it in a pond in the midst of his garden. In time the girl grew to be a lovely woman. Now the

¹ W. Radloff, *op. cit.* ii. 531 sqq.

² *Id.*, iv. 88 sq.

³ *Id.*, i. 345 sq.

King of Indrapoora had a fair young queen, who lived in fear that the king might take to himself a second wife. So, hearing of the charms of Bidasari, the queen resolved to put her out of the way. She lured the girl to the palace and tortured her cruelly; but Bidasari could not die, because her soul was not in her. At last she could stand the torture no longer and said to the queen, "If you wish me to die, you must bring the box which is in the pond in my father's garden." So the box was brought and opened, and there was the golden fish in the water. The girl said, "My soul is in that fish. In the morning you must take the fish out of the water, and in the evening you must put it back into the water. Do not let the fish lie about, but bind it round your neck. If you do this, I shall soon die." So the queen took the fish out of the box and fastened it round her neck; and no sooner had she done so, than Bidasari fell into a swoon. But in the evening, when the fish was put back into the water, Bidasari came to herself again. Seeing that she thus had the girl in her power, the queen sent her home to her adopted parents. To save her from further persecution her parents resolved to remove their daughter from the city. So in a lonely and desolate spot they built a house and brought Bidasari thither. There she dwelt alone, undergoing vicissitudes that corresponded with the vicissitudes of the golden fish in which was her soul. All day long, while the fish was out of the water, she remained unconscious; but in the evening, when the fish was put into the water, she revived. One day the king was out hunting, and coming to the house where Bidasari lay unconscious, was smitten with her beauty. He tried to waken her, but in vain. Next day, towards evening, he repeated his visit, but still found her unconscious. However, when darkness fell, she came to herself and told the king the secret of her life. So the king returned to the palace, took the fish from the queen, and put it in water. Immediately Bidasari revived, and the king took her to wife.¹

¹ G. A. Wilken, "De betrekking tusschen menschen, dieren, en planten-leven naar het volksgelouf," *De Indische Gids*, November 1884, pp. 600-602; *id.*, "De Simsonsage," *De Gids*, 1888,

No. 5, p. 6 *sqq.* (of the separate reprint). Cp. Backer, *L'Archipel Indien*, pp. 144-149. The Malay text of the long poem was published with a Dutch translation and notes by W. R. van

Another story of an external soul comes from Nias, an island to the west of Sumatra, which we have often visited in the course of this book. Once on a time a chief was captured by his enemies, who tried to put him to death but failed. Water would not drown him nor fire burn him nor steel pierce him. At last his wife revealed the secret. On his head he had a hair as hard as a copper wire; and with this wire his life was bound up. So the hair was plucked out, and with it his spirit fled.¹

Ideas of the same sort meet us in stories told by the North American Indians. Thus in one Indian tale the hero pounds his enemy to pieces, but cannot kill him because his heart is not in his body. At last the champion learns that his foe's heart is in the sky, at the western side of the noon-day sun; so he reaches up, seizes the heart, and crushes it, and straightway his enemy expires. In another Indian myth there figures a personage Winter whose song brings frost and snow, but his heart is hidden away at a distance. However, his foe finds the heart and burns it, and so the Snow-maker perishes.² A Pawnee story relates how a wounded warrior was carried off by bears, who healed him of his hurts. When the Indian was about to return to his village, the old he-bear said to him, "I shall look after you. I shall give to you a part of myself. If I am killed, you shall be killed. If I grow old, you shall be old." And the bear gave him a cap of bearskin, and at parting he put his arms round the Indian and hugged him, and put his mouth against the man's mouth and held the man's hands in his paws. The Indian who told the tale conjectured that when the man died, the old bear died also.³ The Navajoes tell of a certain mythical being called "the Maiden that becomes a Bear," who learned the art of turning herself into a bear from

Hoëvell in *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xix. (Batavia, 1843).

¹ Nieuwenhuisen en Rosenberg, "Verslag omtrent het eiland Nias," *Verhandel. van het Batav. Genootsch. v. Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxx. (1863), p. 111; Sundermann, "Die Insel Nias," *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*, xi. (1884), p. 453. Compare E.

Modigliani, *Un Viaggio a Nias*, p. 339.

² J. Curtin, *Myths and Folk-tales of the Russians, Western Slavs, and Magyars* (London, 1891), p. 551. The writer does not mention his authorities.

³ G. B. Grinnell, *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk-tales* (New York, 1889), p. 121 *sqq.*, "The Bear Man."

the prairie wolf. She was a great warrior and quite invulnerable; for when she went to war she took out her vital organs and hid them, so that no one could kill her; and when the battle was over she put the organs back in their places again.¹

§ 4. *The external Soul in Folk-custom*

Thus the idea that the soul may be deposited for a longer or shorter time in some place of security outside the body, or at all events in the hair, is found in the popular tales of many races. It remains to show that the idea is not a mere figment devised to adorn a tale, but is a real article of primitive faith, which has given rise to a corresponding set of customs.

We have seen that in the tales the hero, as a preparation for battle, sometimes removes his soul from his body, in order that his body may be invulnerable and immortal in the combat. With a like intention the savage removes his soul from his body on various occasions of real or imaginary peril. Thus we have seen that among the people of Minahassa in Celebes, when a family moves into a new house, a priest collects the souls of the whole family in a bag, and afterwards restores them to their owners, because the moment of entering a new house is supposed to be fraught with supernatural danger.² In Southern Celebes when a woman is brought to bed the messenger who fetches the doctor or the midwife always carries with him something made of iron, such as a chopping-knife, which he delivers to the doctor. The doctor must keep the thing in his house till the confinement is over, when he gives it back, receiving a fixed sum of money for doing so. The chopping-knife, or whatever it is, represents the woman's soul, which at this critical time is believed to be safer out of her body than in it. Hence the doctor must take great care of the object; for were it lost, the woman's soul would assuredly, they think, be lost with it.³ But in Celebes the convenience of occasionally depositing the soul in some external object is not limited to human

¹ Washington Matthews, "The Mountain Chant: a Navajo ceremony," *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1887), p. 407.

² Above, vol. i. p. 273 sq.

³ B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes*, p. 54.

beings. The Alfoors, who inhabit the central district of that island, and among whose industries the working of iron occupies a foremost place, attribute to the metal a soul which would be apt to desert its body under the blows of the hammer, if some means were not found to detain it. Accordingly in every smithy of Poso—for that is the name of the country of these people—you may see hanging up a bundle of wooden instruments, such as chopping-knives, swords, spear-heads, and so forth. This bundle goes by the name of *lamoa*, which is the general word for "gods," and in it the soul of the iron that is being wrought in the smithy is supposed to reside. "If we did not hang the *lamoa* over the anvil," they say, "the iron would flow away and be unworkable," on account of the absence of the soul.¹

Again, we have seen that in folk-tales a man's soul or strength is sometimes represented as bound up with his hair, and that when his hair is cut off he dies or grows weak. So the natives of Amboyna used to think that their strength was in their hair and would desert them if it were shorn. A criminal under torture in a Dutch Court of that island persisted in denying his guilt till his hair was cut off, when he immediately confessed. One man, who was tried for murder, endured without flinching the utmost ingenuity of his torturers till he saw the surgeon standing with a pair of shears. On asking what this was for, and being told that it was to cut his hair, he begged they would not do it, and made a clean breast. In subsequent cases, when torture failed to wring a confession from a prisoner, the Dutch authorities made a practice of cutting off his hair.² In Ceram it is still believed that if young people have their hair cut they will be weakened and enervated thereby.³ Here in Europe it used to be thought that the maleficent powers of witches and wizards resided in their hair, and that nothing could make any impression on these miscreants so long as

¹ A. C. Kruijt, "Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschappelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer," *Nederdeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xxxix, (1895), p. 23 *sq.* As to the *lamoa* in general, see A. C. Kruijt, *op. cit.* xl. (1896), p. 10 *sq.*

² F. Valentyn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, ii. 143 *sq.*; G. A. Wilken, "De Simsonsage," *De Gids*, 1888, No. 5, p. 15 *sq.* (of the separate reprint).

³ Riedel, *De strik- en kyoesharige rassen tusschen Sebebes en Papua*, p. 137.

they kept their hair on. Hence in France it was customary to shave the whole bodies of persons charged with sorcery before handing them over to the torturer. Millaeus witnessed the torture of some persons at Toulouse, from whom no confession could be wrung until they were stripped and completely shaven, when they readily acknowledged the truth of the charge. A woman also, who apparently led a pious life, was put to the torture on suspicion of witchcraft, and bore her agonies with incredible constancy, until complete depilation drove her to admit her guilt. The noted inquisitor Sprenger contented himself with shaving the head of the suspected witch or wizard; but his more thorough-going colleague Cumanus shaved the whole bodies of forty-one women before committing them all to the flames. He had high authority for this rigorous scrutiny, since Satan himself, in a sermon preached from the pulpit of North Berwick church, comforted his many servants by assuring them that no harm could befall them "sa lang as their hair wes on, and sould newir latt ane teir fall fra thair ene."¹

Further it has been shown that in folk-tales the life of a person is sometimes so bound up with the life of a plant that the withering of the plant will immediately follow or be followed by the death of the person.² Similarly among the M'Bengas in Western Africa, about the Gaboon, when two children are born on the same day, the people plant two trees of the same kind and dance round them. The life of each of the children is believed to be bound up with the life of one of the trees; and if the tree dies or is thrown down, they are sure that the child will soon die.³ In Sierra Leone also it is customary at the birth of a child to plant a shoot of a *malep*-tree, and they think that the tree will grow with the child and be its god. If a tree which has been thus planted withers away, the people consult a sorcerer on the subject.⁴ In the Cameroons, also, the life of a person

¹ J. G. Dalryell, *The darker Superstitions of Scotland*, pp. 637-639; C. de Mensignac, *Recherches Ethnographiques sur la Saline et le Crachat* (Bordeaux, 1892), p. 49 note.

² Above, pp. 357 sq., 360, 363, 366 sq., 377 sq.

³ *Revue d'Ethnographie*, ii. 223.

⁴ Fr. Kunstmann, "Valentin Ferdinand's Beschreibung der Serra Leoa," *Abhandlungen der histor. Classe der könig. Bayer. Akad. der Wissenschaften*, ix. (1866), p. 131 sq.

is believed to be sympathetically bound up with that of a tree.¹ The chief of Old Town in Calabar kept his soul in a sacred grove near a spring of water. When some Europeans, in frolic or ignorance, cut down part of the grove, the spirit was most indignant and threatened the perpetrators of the deed, according to the king, with all manner of evil.² Some of the Papuans unite the life of a new-born child sympathetically with that of a tree by driving a pebble into the bark of the tree. This is supposed to give them complete mastery over the child's life; if the tree is cut down, the child will die.³ After a birth the Maoris used to bury the navel-string in a sacred place and plant a young sapling over it. As the tree grew, it was a *tolu orange* or sign of life for the child; if it flourished, the child would prosper; if it withered and died, the parents augured the worst for their child.⁴ In the Chatham Islands, when the child of a leading man received its name, it was customary to plant a tree, "the growth of which was to be as the growth of the child," and during the planting priests chanted a spell.⁵ In Southern Celebes, when a child is born, a cocoa-nut is planted, and is watered with the water in which the after-birth and navel-string have been washed. As it grows up, the tree is called the "contemporary" of the child.⁶ So in Bali a cocoa-palm is planted at the birth of a child. It is believed to grow up equally with the child, and is called its "life-plant."⁷ In the Kei Islands, when a birth has occurred, the placenta are put in a pot with ashes and so deposited among the branches of a tree. According as the child is a boy or a girl, the placenta are regarded as its brother or sister, and the intention of setting them on a tree is to enable them to keep

¹ Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, i. 165.

² J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth*, p. 178.

³ Bastian, *Ein Besuch in San Salvador*, p. 103 sq.; *id.*, *Der Mensch in der Geschichte*, iii. 193.

⁴ R. Taylor, *Ti Ika a Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*,² p. 184; Dumont D'Urville, *l'oyage autour*

du monde et à la recherche de la Pérouse sur la corvette Astrolabe, ii. 444.

⁵ W. T. L. Travers, "Notes of the traditions and manners and customs of the Mori-oris," *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, ix. (1876), p. 22.

⁶ Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes*, p. 59.

⁷ Van Eck, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, N.S., ix. (1880), p. 417 sq.

a watchful eye on the fortunes of their comrade.¹ On certain occasions the Dyaks of Borneo plant a palm-tree, which is believed to be a complete index of their fate. If it flourishes, they reckon on good fortune; but if it withers or dies, they expect misfortune.² According to another account, at the naming of children and certain other festivals the Dyaks are wont to set a *sawang*-plant, roots and all, before a priestess; and when the festival is over, the plant is replaced in the ground. Such a plant becomes thenceforth a sort of prophetic index for the person in whose honour the festival was held. If the plant thrives, the man will be fortunate; if it fades or perishes, some evil will befall him.³ It is said that there are still families in Russia, Germany, England, France, and Italy who are accustomed to plant a tree at the birth of a child. The tree, it is hoped, will grow with the child, and it is tended with special care.⁴ The custom is still pretty general in the canton of Aargau in Switzerland; an apple-tree is planted for a boy and a pear-tree for a girl, and the people think that the child will flourish or dwindle with the tree.⁵ In Mecklenburg the after-birth is thrown out at the foot of a young tree, and the child is then believed to grow with the tree.⁶ In Bosnia, when the children of a family have died one after the other, the hair of the next child is cut with some ceremony by a stranger, and the mother carries the shorn tresses into the garden, where she ties them to a fine young tree, in order that her

¹ C. M. Pleyte, "Ethnographische Beschrijving der Kei-Eilanden," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (1893), p. 816 sq. Some of the Galelaree plant the navel-string with a banana-bush or cocoa-nut, but it is not said that any superstition attaches to the observance (M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Folkkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xiv. (1895), p. 461). Among the Wakondyo, at the north-western corner of the Albert Nyanza, it is customary to bury the after-birth at the foot of a young banana-tree; and the fruit of this particular tree may

be eaten by no one but the woman who assisted at the birth (Fr. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika*, p. 653). Compare vol. i. p. 53 sqq.

² G. A. Wilken, "De Simsonsage," *De Gids*, 1888, No. 5, p. 26 (of the separate reprint).

³ F. Grabowsky, "Die Theogenie der Dajaken auf Borneo," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, v. (1892), p. 133.

⁴ Gubernatis, *Mythologie des Plantes*, i. p. xxviii. sq.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 50; Floss, *Das Kind*,² i. 79.

⁶ K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. p. 43, § 63.

child may grow and flourish like the tree.¹ When Lord Byron first visited his ancestral estate of Newstead "he planted, it seems, a young oak in some part of the grounds, and had an idea that as *it* flourished so should *he*."² On a day when the cloud that settled on the later years of Sir Walter Scott lifted a little, and he heard that *Woodstock* had sold for over eight thousand pounds, he wrote in his journal: "I have a curious fancy; I will go set two or three acorns, and judge by their success in growing whether I shall succeed in clearing my way or not."³ Near the Castle of Dalhousie, not far from Edinburgh, there grows an oak-tree, called the Edgewell Tree, which is popularly believed to be linked to the fate of the family by a mysterious tie; for they say that when one of the family dies, or is about to die, a branch falls from the Edgewell Tree. Thus, on seeing a great bough drop from the tree on a quiet, still day in July 1874, an old forester exclaimed, "The laird's deid noo!" and soon after news came that Fox Maule, eleventh Earl of Dalhousie, was dead.⁴

In England children are sometimes passed through a cleft ash-tree as a cure for rupture or rickets, and thenceforward a sympathetic connection is supposed to exist between them and the tree. An ash-tree which had been used for this purpose grew at the edge of Shirley Heath, on the road from Hockly House to Birmingham. "Thomas Chillingworth, son of the owner of an adjoining farm, now about thirty-four, was, when an infant of a year old, passed through a similar tree, now perfectly sound, which he preserves with so much care that he will not suffer a single branch to be touched, for it is believed the life of the patient depends on the life of the tree, and the moment that is cut down, be the patient ever so distant, the rupture returns, and a mortification ensues, and terminates in death, as was the case in a man driving a waggon on the very road in question." "It is not uncommon, however," adds the writer, "for persons to survive for a time the felling of the

¹ F. S. Krauss, "Haarschurgodschaft bei den Südslaven," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, vii. (1894), p. 193.

² Moore's *Life of Lord Byron*, i. 101.

³ Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (First Edition), vi. 283.

⁴ Sir Walter Scott's *Journal* (First Edition), ii. 282, with the editor's note.

tree."¹ The ordinary mode of effecting the cure is to split a young ash-sapling longitudinally for a few feet and pass the child, naked, thrice through the fissure at sunrise. As soon as the ceremony has been performed, the tree is bound tightly up and the fissure plastered over with mud or clay. The belief is that just as the cleft in the tree closes up, so the rupture in the child's body will be healed; but that if the rift in the tree remains open, the rupture in the child will remain too." Some thirty years ago the remedy was still in common use at Fittleworth and many other places in Sussex. The account of the Sussex practice and belief is notable because it brings out very clearly the sympathetic relation supposed to exist between the ruptured child and the tree through which it has been passed. We are told that the patient "must be passed nine times every morning on nine successive days at sunrise through a cleft in a sapling ash-tree, which has been so far given up by the owner of it to the parents of the child, as that there is an understanding it shall not be cut down during the life of the infant who is to be passed through it. The sapling must be sound at heart, and the cleft must be made with an axe. The child on being carried to the tree must be attended by nine persons, each of whom must pass it through the cleft from west to east. On the ninth morning the solemn ceremony is concluded by binding the tree lightly with a cord, and it is supposed that as the cleft closes the health of the child will improve. In the neighbourhood of Petworth some cleft ash-trees may be seen, through which children have very recently been passed. I may add, that only a few weeks since, a person who had lately purchased an ash-tree

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1804, p. 909; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 289.

² Brand, *op. cit.* iii. 287-292; W. G. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 67 sq.; W. Wollaston Groome, "Suffolk Leechcraft," *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895), p. 123 sq.; E. S. Hartland, in *Folk-lore*, vii. (1896), pp. 303-306; *County Folk-lore, Suffolk*, edited by Lady Gordon, pp. 26-28. To ensure the success of the cure various additional precautions are

sometimes prescribed, as that the ash should be a maiden, that is a tree that has never been topped or cut; that the split should be made east and west; that the child should be passed into the tree by a maiden and taken out on the other side by a boy; that the child should always be passed through head foremost (but according to others feet foremost), and so forth. In Surrey we hear of a holly-tree being used instead of an ash (*Notes and Queries*, Sixth Series, xi. Jan.-Jun. 1885, p. 46).

standing in this parish, intending to cut it down, was told by the father of a child, who had some time before been passed through it, that the infirmity would be sure to return upon his son if it were felled. Whereupon the good man said, he knew that such would be the case; and therefore he would not fell it for the world."¹

A similar cure for various diseases, but especially for rupture, has been commonly practised in other parts of Europe, for example in Germany, France, Denmark, and Sweden, but in these countries the tree employed for the purpose is generally not an ash but an oak. With this exception, the practice and the belief are nearly the same on the continent as in England, though sometimes German wiseacres recommend that the ceremony should be performed on Christmas Eve, Good Friday, or the Eve of St. John; in this last case it is desirable that two persons of the name of John should hold the split oak-sapling open, while a third 'John' receives the child after it has been passed through the cleft.² In Mecklenburg, as in England, the sympathetic relation thus established between

¹ "Some West Sussex superstitions lingering in 1868, collected by Charlotte Latham, at Fittleworth," *Folk-lore Record*, i. (1878), p. 40 sq.

² For the custom in Germany, see Grimm, *D.M.*¹ ii. 975 sq.; Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² p. 317, § 503; Kuhn und Schwartz, *Nord-deutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 443 sq., § 340; Woeste, *Volksüberlieferungen in der Grafschaft Mark*, p. 54, § 4; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schweben*, p. 390, § 56; *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, ii. 255 (willow-tree); J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbräuche*, etc., im *Voigtlande*, p. 414 sq.; L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg*, i. 72 sq., § 88; K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. p. 290 sq., § 1447; J. Haltrich, *Zur Volkskunde der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, p. 264. As to France, see Marcellus, *De medicamentis*, xxxiii. 26 (where the tree is a cherry); De

Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 231; Béranger-Féraud, in *Bulletins de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, Quatrième Série, i. (1890), pp. 895-902; *id.*, *Superstitions et Survivances*, i. 523 sqq. As to Denmark and Sweden, see Grimm, *D.M.*¹ ii. 976; H. F. Feilberg, "Zwieselbäume nebst verwandten Aberglauben in Skandinavien," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897), p. 42 sqq. According to some, the tree through which the child is passed should have been split by lightning (Bartsch, *l.c.*). The whole subject of passing sick people through narrow apertures as a mode of cure has been well handled in an elegant little monograph (*Un vieux rite médical*, Paris, 1892) by Mr. H. Gaidoz, with whose general conclusion I agree. Compare also K. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche* (Stuttgart, 1878), p. 31 sq.; E. S. Hartland, *Legend of Persens*, ii. 146 sq.; Béranger-Féraud, *Superstitions et Survivances*, i. 523-540.

the tree and the child is so close that if the tree is cut down the child will die.¹ In the island of Rügen people believe that when a person who has been thus cured of rupture dies, his soul passes into the same oak-tree through which his body was passed in his youth.² Thus it seems that with the disease the sufferer is supposed to transfer a certain vital part of himself to the tree so that it is impossible to injure the tree without at the same time injuring the man; and in Rügen this partial union is thought to be completed by the transmigration of the man's soul at death into the tree. Apparently the disease is conceived as something physical, which forms part of the patient and yet can be stripped off him and left behind in the narrow aperture through which he has forced his way. As this view of the matter has been recently disputed,³ it seems desirable to establish it, if possible, by confirmatory evidence. We shall find such evidence in various parts of the world.

In the island of Nias, when a man is in training for the priesthood, he has to be introduced to the various spirits between whom and mankind it will be his office to mediate. A priest takes him to an open window, and while the drums are beating points out to him the great spirit in the sun who calls away men to himself through death; for it is needful that the future priest should know him from whose grasp he will often be expected to wrest the sick and dying. In the evening twilight he is led to the graves and shown the envious spirits of the dead, who also are ever drawing away the living to their own shadowy world. Next day he is conducted to a river and shown the spirit of the waters; and finally they take him up to a mountain and exhibit to him the spirits of the mountains, who have diverse shapes, some appearing like swine, others like buffaloes, others like goats, and others again like men with long hair on their bodies. When he has seen all this, his education is complete, but on his return from the mountain the new priest may not at once enter his own house. For the

¹ Ploss, *Das Kind*,² ii. 221.

thologie und Sittenkunde, ii. (1855), p. 141.

² R. Baier, "Beiträge von der Insel Rügen," *Zeitschrift für deutsche My-*

³ By Mr. E. S. Harland, *Legend of Persens*, ii. 147.

people think that, were he to do so, the dangerous spirits by whom he is still environed would stay in the house and visit both the family and the pigs with sickness. Accordingly he betakes himself to other villages and passes several nights there, hoping that the spirits will leave him and settle on the friends who receive him into their houses; but naturally he does not reveal the intention of his visit to his hosts. Lastly, before he enters his own dwelling, he looks out for some young tree by the way, splits it down the middle, and then creeps through the fissure, in the belief that any spirit which may still be clinging to him will thus be left sticking to the tree.¹ Again, among the Bilqula or Bella Coola Indians of British Columbia "the bed of a mourner must be protected against the ghost of the deceased. His male relatives stick a thorn-bush into the ground at each corner of their beds. After four days these are thrown into the water. Mourners must rise early and go into the woods, where they stick four thorn-bushes into the ground, at the corners of a square, in which they cleanse themselves by rubbing their bodies with cedar branches. They also swim in ponds. After swimming they cleave four small trees and creep through the clefts, following the course of the sun. This they do on four subsequent mornings, cleaving new trees every day. Mourners cut their hair short. The hair that has been cut off is burnt. If they should not observe these regulations, it is believed that they would dream of the deceased."² To the savage, who fails to distinguish the visions of sleep from the appearances of waking life, the apparition of a dead man in a dream is equivalent to the actual presence of the ghost; and accordingly he seeks to keep off the spiritual intruder, just as he might a creature of flesh and blood, by fencing his bed with thorn-bushes. Similarly the practice of creeping through four cleft trees is clearly an attempt to shake off the clinging ghost and leave it adhering to the trees, just as in Nias the

¹ Fr. Kramer, "Der Götzendienst der Niaser," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890), pp. 478-480.

² Fr. Boas, in *Seventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*,

p. 13 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1891*). We have seen (vol. i. p. 325) that the Shushwap Indians of the same region also fence their beds against ghosts with a hedge of thorn bushes.

future priest hopes to rid himself in like manner of the dangerous spirits who have dogged his steps from the mountains and the graves.

This interpretation of the custom is strongly confirmed by a funeral ceremony which Dr. C. Hose witnessed in December 1898 at the chief village of the Madangs, a tribe who occupy a hitherto unexplored district in the heart of Borneo. "Just across the river from where we were sitting," says Dr. Hose, "was the graveyard, and there I witnessed a funeral procession as the day was drawing to a close. The coffin, which was a wooden box made from a tree-trunk, was decorated with red and black patterns in circles, with two small wooden figures of men placed at either end; it was lashed with rattans to a long pole, and by this means was lifted to the shoulders of the bearers, who numbered thirteen in all, and who then carried it to the burying-ground. After the mourners had all passed over to the graveyard, a man quickly cut a couple of small sticks, each five feet long and about an inch in diameter. One of these he split almost the whole way down, and forced the unsplit end into the ground, when the upper part opened like a V, leaving sufficient room for each person to pass through. He next split the top of the other stick, and placing another short stick in the cleft, made a cross, which he also forced into the ground. The funeral procession climbed the mound on which the cemetery was situated, passing through the V of the cleft stick in single file. As soon as the coffin had been placed on the stage erected for the purpose, the people commenced their return, following on one another's heels as quickly as possible, each spitting out the words, '*Pit balli krat balli jat tesip bertatip!*' ('Keep back, and close out all things evil, and sickness') as they passed through the V-shaped stick. The whole party having left the graveyard, the gate was closed by the simple process of tying the cleft ends of the stick together, and a few words were then said to the cross-stick, which they call *ngring*, or the wall that separates the living from the dead. All who had taken part in the ceremony then went and bathed before returning to their homes, rubbing their skins with rough pebbles, the old Mosaic idea of the uncleanness of the dead, as mentioned in

Numbers (chap. xix.), evidently finding a place among their religious beliefs. It is apparently a great relief to their minds to think that they can shut out the spirit of the deceased. They believe that the spirit of the dead is not aware that life has left the body until a short time after the coffin has been taken to the graveyard, and then not until the spirit has had leisure to notice the clothes, weapons, and other articles belonging to its earthly estate, which are placed with the coffin. But before this takes place the gate has been closed."¹ Here the words uttered by the mourners in passing through the cloven stick show clearly that they believe the stick to act as a barrier or fence, on the further side of which they leave behind the ghost, whose successful pursuit might entail sickness and death on the survivors. Thus the passage of these Madang mourners through the cleft stick is strictly analogous to the passage of ruptured English children through a cleft ash-tree. Both are simply ways of leaving an evil thing behind. Similarly the subsequent binding up of the cloven stick in Borneo is analogous to the binding up of the cloven ash-tree in England. Both are merely ways of barricading the road against the evil which is dogging your steps: having passed through the doorway you slam the door in the face of your pursuer.

With a like intention, doubtless, some of the savages of Tonquin repair after a burial to the banks of a stream and there creep through a triangle formed by leaning two reeds against each other, while the sorcerer souses them with dirty water. All the relations of the deceased must wash their garments in the stream before they return home, and they may not set foot in the house till they have shorn their hair at the foot of the ladder. Afterwards the sorcerer comes and sprinkles the whole house with water for the purpose of expelling evil spirits.² Here again we cannot doubt that the creeping through the triangle of reeds is intended to rid the mourners of the troublesome ghost. So when the Kamtchatkans had dis-

¹ C. Hose, "In the heart of Borneo," *The Geographical Journal*, xvi. July 1900, p. 45 *sq.*

² Pinabel, "Notes sur quelques

peuplades dépendant du Tong-King," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, Septième Série, v. (Paris, 1884), p. 430.

posed of a corpse after their usual fashion by throwing it to the dogs to be devoured, they purified themselves as follows. They went into the forest and cut various roots which they bent into rings, and through these rings they crept twice. Afterwards they carried the rings back to the forest and flung them away westward. The Koraks, a people of the same region, burn their dead and hold a festival in honour of the departed a year after the death. At this festival, which takes place on the spot where the corpse was burned, or, if that is too far off, on a neighbouring height, they sacrifice two young reindeer which have never been in harness, and the sorcerer sticks a great many reindeer horns in the earth, believing that thereby he is dispatching a whole herd of these animals to their deceased friend in the other world. Then they all hasten home, and purify themselves by passing between two poles planted in the ground, while the sorcerer strikes them with a stick and adjures death not to carry them off.¹ In the light of the customs cited above, as well as of a multitude of ceremonies observed for a similar purpose in all parts of the world,² we may safely assume that when people creep through rings after a death or pass between poles after a sacrifice to the dead, their intention simply is to interpose a barrier between themselves and the ghost; they make their way through a narrow pass or aperture through which they hope that the ghost will not be able to follow them. To put it otherwise, they conceive that the spirit of the dead is sticking to them like a burr, and that like a burr it may be rubbed or scraped off and left adhering to the sides of the opening through which they have squeezed themselves.

Similarly, when a pestilence is raging among the Koraks, they kill a dog, wind its guts about two poles, and pass between the poles,³ doubtless for the sake of giving the slip to the demon of the plague in the same way that they give the slip to the ghost. When the Kayans of Borneo have

¹ S. Krascheninnikow, *Beschreibung des Landes Kamtschatka* (Leningo, 1766), pp. 268, 282.

² For some examples of these I may refer to an article of mine, "On certain burial customs as illustrative of the

primitive theory of the soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv. (1886), p. 64 sqq.

³ S. Krascheninnikow, *op. cit.* p. 277 sq.

been dogged by an evil spirit on a journey and are nearing their destination, they fashion a small archway of boughs, light a fire under it, and pass in single file under the archway and over the fire, spitting into the fire as they pass. By this ceremony, we are told, "they thoroughly exorcise the evil spirits and emerge on the other side free from all baleful influences."¹ Here, to make assurance doubly sure, a fire as well as an archway is interposed between the travellers and the dreadful beings who are walking unseen behind. In our own country the Highlanders of Strathspey used to force all their sheep and lambs to pass through a hoop of rowan-tree on All Saints' Day and Beltane (the first of November and the first of May),² probably as a means of warding off the witches, who are especially dreaded on the first of May, and against whose malignant arts the rowan-tree affords an efficient protection. In Sweden when a natural ring has been found in a tree, it is carefully removed and treasured in the family; for sick and especially rickety children are cured by merely passing through it.³ To crawl under a bramble which has formed an arch by sending down a second root into the ground, is an English cure for whooping-cough, rheumatism, boils, and other complaints. In Devonshire the patient should creep through the arch thrice with the sun, that is from east to west. When a child is passed through it for whooping-cough, the operators ought to say:

"In bramble, out cough,
Here I leave the whooping-cough."⁴

¹ W. H. Furness, *Folk-lore in Borneo, a Sketch*, p. 28 (Wallingford, Pennsylvania, 1899, privately printed).

² John Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by A. Allardyce, ii. 454. Immediately after mentioning this custom the writer adds: "And in Breadalbane it is the custom for the dairymaid to drive the cattle to the sheals with a wand of that tree [the rowan] cut upon the day of removal, which is laid above the door until the cattle be going back again to the winter-town. This was reckoned a

preservative against witchcraft." As to the witches' sabbath on the first of May, see above, pp. 132, 266, and vol. i. p. 194, note 3. As to the power of the rowan-tree to counteract their spells, see W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 188; J. C. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish* (London, 1891), p. 97 *sqq.*

³ H. F. Feilberg, "Zwieselbäume nebst verwandten Aberglauben in Skandinavien," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897), p. 49 *sq.*

⁴ Dyer, *English Folk-lore*, p. 171 *sq.*; W. G. Black, *Folk-medicine*, p. 70.

In Périgord and other parts of France the same cure is employed for boils.¹ In Bulgaria, when a person suffers from a congenital malady such as scrofula, a popular cure is to take him to a neighbouring village and there make him creep naked thrice through an arch, which is formed by inserting the lower ends of two vine branches in the ground and joining their upper ends together. When he has done so, he hangs his clothes on a tree, and dons other garments. On his way home the patient must also crawl under a ploughshare, which is held high enough to let him pass.² Further, when whooping-cough is prevalent in a Bulgarian village, an old woman will scrape the earth from under the root of a willow-tree. Then all the children of the village creep through the opening thus made, and a thread from the garment of each of them is hung on the willow. Adults sometimes go through the same ceremony after recovering from a dangerous illness.³ Similarly, when sickness is rife among some of the villages to the east of Lake Nyassa, the inhabitants crawl through an arch formed by bending a wand and inserting the two ends in the ground. By way of further precaution they wash themselves on the spot with medicine and water, and then bury the medicine and the evil influence together in the earth. The same ceremony is resorted to as a means of keeping off evil spirits, wild beasts, and enemies.⁴ In Uganda, when a chief is sick, they sometimes kill a cow near his house and sprinkle the blood on the door-posts. A stout stick, to which some grass has been fastened, is also daubed with the blood and placed across the doorway. Then the sick man, who has been brought out to witness all this, is besprinkled with the blood on his forehead, shoulders, and legs below the knees. After that he must jump over the stick in the doorway, and as he does so he lets his bark-

¹ De Nore, *Contumes, Mythes et Traditions des Provinces de France*, p. 152; H. Gaidoz, *Un vieux rite médical*, p. 7 sq.

² A. Strausz, *Die Bulgaren* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 414.

³ A. Strausz, *op. cit.* p. 404.

⁴ *Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa* (London, 1874).

i. 60. Among some tribes of South-Eastern Australia it was customary at the ceremonies of initiation to bend growing saplings into arches and compel the novices to pass under them; sometimes the youths had to crawl on the ground to get through. The intention of the ceremony is not stated. See A. W. Howitt, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xiii. (1884), p. 445.

cloth fall off. He may not look behind him, but must go straight on. The priest then takes up the meat and the bark-cloth and goes in the opposite direction, never looking behind him. Afterwards he eats the meat with his friends in the open space before the chief's house. We are told that "the evil is thus atoned for and clings to the bark-cloth." Sometimes the treatment is different. After the door-posts have been bespattered with the blood of the cow, the patient is brought into the garden. Here the priest takes a plantain stem some six feet long, and having made a long cut down it, opens it wide enough for the sick man to pass through. As the patient goes through he leaves his bark-cloth behind, and walks straight on into the house. After that the priest removes the plantain stem and throws it away on the road.¹ Here plainly the patient is supposed to leave the sickness behind him adhering to the bark-cloth at the moment when he jumps over the blood-smeared stick in the doorway or squeezes himself through the cleft in the split plantain.

But if the intention of these ceremonies is merely to rid the performer of some harmful thing, whether a disease or a ghost or a demon, which is supposed to be clinging to him, we should expect to find that any narrow hole or opening would serve the purpose as well as a cleft tree or stick, an arch or ring of boughs, or a couple of posts fixed upright in the ground. And this expectation is not disappointed. On the coast of Morven and Mull thin ledges of rock may be seen pierced with large holes near the sea. Consumptive people used to be brought thither, and after the tops of nine waves had been caught in a dish and thrown on the patient's head, he was made to pass through one of the rifted rocks thrice in the direction of the sun.² In the parish of Madern in Cornwall there is a perforated stone called the *Mên an Tol*, or "holed stone," through which people formerly crept as a remedy for pains in the back and limbs; and at certain times of the year parents drew their children through the

¹ From notes on the customs and religion of the Waganda sent me by the Rev. John Roscoe, missionary in Uganda.

² John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 451 sq.

hole to cure them of the rickets.¹ Near Everek, on the site of the ancient Caesarca in Asia Minor, there is a rifted rock through which persons pass to rid themselves of a cough.² Sometimes the hole which is to serve as a gateway to health and happiness is made by burrowing in the ground. In the Middle Ages both children and cattle were cured by being forced through a hole dug in the earth.³ Less than twenty years ago a Danish cure for childish ailments was to dig up several sods, arrange them so as to form a hole, and then pass the sick child through it.⁴ Among the Corannas, a people of the Hottentot race on the Orange River, "when a child recovers from a dangerous illness, a trench is dug in the ground, across the middle of which an arch is thrown, and an ox made to stand upon it; the child is then dragged under the arch. After this ceremony the animal is killed, and eaten by married people who have children, none else being permitted to participate of the feast."⁵ Here the attempt to leave the sickness behind in the hole, which is probably the essence of the ceremony, may perhaps be combined with an endeavour to impart to the child the strength and vigour of the animal. Ancient India seems also to have been familiar with the same primitive notion that

¹ W. Botlase, *Antiquities, historical and monumental, of the County of Cornwall* (London, 1779), p. 177 sq.

² Carnoy et Nicolaidès, *Traditions populaires de l'Asie Mineure*, p. 338.

³ Grimm, *D.M.* ii. 975 sq.; II. Gaidoz, *Un vieux rite médical*, pp. 11, 21.

⁴ H. Feilberg, in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897), p. 45.

⁵ J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, Second Journey* (London, 1822), ii. 346. Among the same people "when a person is ill, they bring an ox to the place where he is laid. Two cuts are then made in one of its legs, extending down the whole length of it. The skin in the middle of the leg being raised up, the operator thrusts in his hand, to make way for that of the sick person, whose whole body is afterwards rubbed over with the blood of the animal. The ox after

enduring this torment is killed, and those who are married and have children, as in the other case, are the only partakers of the feast" (J. Campbell, *op. cit.* ii. 346 sq.). Here again the intention seems to be not so much to transfer the disease to the ox, as to transfuse the healthy life of the beast into the veins of the sick man. The same is perhaps true of the Welsh and French cure for whooping-cough, which consists in passing the little sufferer several times under an ass. See Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 288; Béranger-Féraud, in *Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, Quatrième Série, i. (1890), p. 897; *id.*, *Superstitions et Superstitions*, i. 526. But more probably the intention really is to give the whooping-cough to the animal; for it might reasonably be thought that the feeble whoop of the sick child would neither seriously impair the lungs, nor perceptibly nagment the stentorian bray, of the donkey.

sickness could, as it were, be stripped off the person of the sufferer by passing him through a narrow aperture; for in the Rigveda it is said that Indra cured Apala of a disease of the skin by drawing her through the yoke of the chariot; "thus the god made her to have a golden skin, purifying her thrice."¹

We may therefore take it as tolerably certain that, in the opinion of the vulgar, the sympathetic relation established between a person and the tree through which he has been passed arises from the transference to the tree of some vital portion of the man, and further that this transference is supposed to take place in the crassest and most palpable fashion, the man leaving a part of himself behind him in the tree, just as he might leave shreds of his skin or clothing behind him in a thorn-hedge through which he had forced his way. That the thing which he thus deposits in the tree is often a disease or malady makes no difference; to the primitive mind a disease may easily present itself as a concrete material thing which forms part of the man and which may, like his skin or his nails, be detached from him by physical abrasion.

But in practice, as in folk-tales, it is not merely with trees and plants that the life of a person is occasionally believed to be united by a bond of physical sympathy. The same bond, it is supposed, may exist between a man and an animal or a thing, so that the death or destruction of the animal or thing is immediately followed by the death of the man. The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus was once informed by an astronomer that the life of Simeon, prince of Bulgaria, was bound up with a certain column in Constantinople, so that if the capital of the column were removed

¹ H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 495. With the preceding examples before us, it seems worth while asking whether the ancient Italian practice of making conquered enemies to pass under a yoke may not in its origin have been a purificatory ceremony, designed to strip the foe of his malignant and hostile powers before dismissing him to his home. For apparently the ceremony was only

observed with prisoners who were about to be released; had it been a mere mark of ignominy, there seems to be no reason why it should not have been inflicted also on men who were doomed to die. See Livy, iii. 28, ix. 6, 15, x. 36. The so-called yoke in this case consisted of two spears set upright in the ground with a third spear laid transversely across them (Livy, iii. 28).

Simeon would immediately die. The Emperor took the hint and removed the capital, and at the same hour, as the emperor learned by inquiry, Simeon died of heart disease in Bulgaria.¹ Amongst the Karens of Burma "the knife with which the navel-string is cut is carefully preserved for the child. The life of the child is supposed to be in some way connected with it, for if lost or destroyed it is said the child will not be long-lived."² When Mr. Macdonald was one day sitting in the house of a Hlubi chief, awaiting the appearance of that great man, who was busy decorating his person, a native pointed to a pair of magnificent ox-horns, and said, "Ntame has his soul in these horns." The horns were those of an animal which had been sacrificed, and they were held sacred. A magician had fastened them to the roof to protect the house and its inmates from the thunder-bolt. "The idea," adds Mr. Macdonald, "is in no way foreign to South African thought. A man's soul there may dwell in the roof of his house, in a tree, by a spring of water, or on some mountain scaur."³ An old Mang'anje woman in the West Shire district of British Central Africa used to wear round her neck an ivory ornament, bollow, and about three inches long, which she called her life or soul (*moyo wanga*). Naturally, she would not part with it; a planter tried to buy it of her, but in vain.⁴ Some twenty years ago, two English missionaries established at San Salvador, the capital of the king of Congo, asked the natives repeatedly whether any of them had seen the strange, big, East African goat which Stanley had given to a chief at Stanley Pool in 1877. But their inquiries were fruitless; no native would admit that he had seen the goat. "Some years afterward, the missionaries discovered that the reason they could obtain no reply to their inquiry was that the people all thought that they, the missionaries, believed the goat contained the spirit of the king of San Salvador, and

¹ Cedrenus, *Compend. Histor.* p. 625 B, vol. ii. p. 308, ed. Bekker.

² F. Mason, "Physical Character of the Karens," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1866, pt. ii. p. 9.

³ J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth*, p. 190.

⁴ Alice Werner, in a letter to the author, dated 25th September 1899. Miss Werner knew the old woman. Compare *Contemporary Reviews*, lxx. (July-December 1896), p. 389, where Miss Werner describes the ornament as a rounded peg, tapering to a point, with a neck or notch at the top.

therefore they wished to obtain possession of it, and so exercise an evil influence over the king."¹ Among several of the tribes on the banks of the Niger, between Lokoja and the delta, there exists "a belief in the possibility of a man possessing an *alter ego* in the form of some animal, such as a crocodile or hippopotamus. It is believed that such a person's life is bound up with that of the animal to such an extent that whatever affects the one produces a corresponding impression upon the other, and that if one dies the other must speedily do so too. It happened not very long ago that an Englishman shot a hippopotamus close to a native village; the friends of a woman who died the same night in the village demanded and eventually obtained five pounds as compensation for the murder of the woman."² At home in England beliefs of the same sort are not unknown. In Yorkshire witches are thought to stand in such peculiarly close relations to hares, that if a particular hare is killed or wounded, a certain witch will at the same moment be killed or receive a hurt in her body exactly corresponding to the wound in the hare.³ In like manner the Yakuts of Siberia believe that every shaman or wizard keeps his soul, or one of his souls, incarnate in an animal which is carefully concealed from all the world. "Nobody can find my external soul, it lies hidden far away in the stony mountains of Edzhigansk," said one famous wizard. Only once a year, when the last snows melt and the earth turns black, do these incarnate souls of shamans in animal form appear among the dwellings of men. They wander everywhere, but none save shamans can see them. The strong ones sweep roaring and noisily along, the weak steal about quietly and furtively. Often they fight, and then the wizard whose external soul is beaten, falls ill or dies. The weakest and most cowardly wizards are they whose souls are incarnate in the shape of dogs, for the dog gives his human double no peace, but gnaws his heart and tears his body. The most powerful wizards are they whose

¹ Herbert Ward, *Five Years with the Congo Cannibals* (London, 1890), p. 53.

² C. H. Robinson, *Hausaland* (London, 1896), p. 36 sq.

³ Th. Parkinson, *Yorkshire Legends and Traditions*, Second Series (London, 1889), p. 160 sq.; J. C. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish* (London, 1891), p. 82 sqq.

external souls have the shape of stallions, elks, black bears, eagles, or boars. Again, the Samoyeds of the Turukhinsk region hold that every shaman has a familiar spirit in the shape of a boar, which he leads about by a magic belt. On the death of the boar, the shaman himself dies; and stories are told of battles between wizards, who send their spirits to fight before they encounter each other in person.¹ The Malays believe that "the soul of a person may pass into another person or into an animal, or rather that such a mysterious relation can arise between the two that the fate of the one is wholly dependent on that of the other."² In the Banks Islands "some people connect themselves with an object, generally an animal, as a lizard or a snake, or with a stone, which they imagine to have a certain very close natural relation to themselves. This, at Mota, is called *tamaniu*—likeness: This word at Aurora is used for the 'atai' [*i.e.* soul] of Mota. Some fancy dictates the choice of a *tamaniu*; or it may be found by drinking the infusion of certain herbs and heaping together the dregs. Whatever living thing is first seen in or upon the heap is the *tamaniu*. It is watched, but not fed or worshipped. The natives believe that it comes at call. The life of the man is bound up with the life of his *tamaniu*. If it dies, gets broken or lost, the man will die. In sickness they send to see how the *tamaniu* is, and judge the issue accordingly. This is only the fancy of some."³

But what among the Banks Islanders and the Malays is irregular and occasional, among other peoples is systematic and universal. The Zulus believe that every man has his *ihlozi*, a kind of mysterious serpent, "which specially guards and helps him, lives with him, wakes with him, sleeps and travels with him, but always under ground. If it ever makes its appearance, great is the joy, and the man must seek to discover the meaning of its appearance.

¹ Mikhaïlovskii, "Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895), pp. 133, 134.

² Matthes, *Alukussarsch-Hollandsch Woordenboek, s.v. soemângi*, 1, 569; G. A. Wilken, "Het animisme bij de volken van den Indischen Archipel,"

De Indische Gids, June 1884, p. 933.

³ R. H. Codrington, "Notes on the Customs of Mota, Banks Islands" (communicated by the Rev. Lorimer Fison), *Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria*, xvi. 136. Compare *id.*, *The Melanesians*, p. 251.

He who has no *ihlozi* must die. Therefore if any one unintentionally kills an *ihlozi* serpent, the man whose *ihlozi* it was dies, but the serpent comes to life again."¹ Every Calabar negro has regularly four souls, one of which always lives outside of his body in the form of a wild beast in the forest. This bush-soul, as Miss Kingsley calls it, may be almost any animal, for example a leopard, a fish, or a tortoise; but it is never a domestic animal and never a plant. Unless he is gifted with second sight, a man cannot see his own bush-soul, but a diviner will often tell him what sort of creature his bush-soul is, and after that the man will be careful not to kill any animal of that species and will strongly object to any one else doing so. A man and his sons have usually the same sort of animals for their bush-souls, and so with a mother and her daughters. But sometimes all the children of a family take after the bush-soul of their father; for example, if his external soul is a leopard, all his sons and daughters will have leopards for their external souls. And on the other hand, sometimes they all take after their mother; for instance, if her external soul is a tortoise, all the external

¹ F. Speckmann, *Die Hermannsburg Mission in Afrika* (Hermannsburg, 1876), p. 167. However, Miss Alice Werner writes to me (25th September 1899) that she thinks Mr. Speckmann's "account of the *idhlozi* (not *ihlozi*) among the Zulus is not the correct one—certainly it is not the one usually received. The *amadhlozi* are ancestral spirits, who come back on occasion, in the form of snakes." Certainly, in the other accounts which I have consulted, the *amadhlozi* (plural form of *idhlozi*) are said to be serpents into which people change at death. Serpents which are dead men may easily be distinguished from common snakes, for they frequent huts; they do not eat mice, and they are not afraid of people. If a man in his life had a scar, his serpent after his death will also have a scar; if he had only one eye, his serpent will have only one eye; if he was lame, his serpent will be lame too. That is how you can recognise So-and-so in his serpent-form.

Chiefs do not turn into the same kind of snakes as ordinary people. For common folk become harmless snakes with green and white bellies and very small heads; but kings become boa-constrictors or the large and deadly black Mamba. See J. Shooter, *Kafirs of Natal*, p. 161 *sq.*; Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, Part ii. pp. 134 *sq.*, 140, 196-202, 205, 208-211, 231; David Leslie, *Among the Zulus and Amatongas* (Edinburgh, 1875), pp. 48, 148, 213. Mr. F. B. Jevons has suggested that the Roman *genius*, the guardian-spirit which accompanied a man from birth to death (Censorinus, *De die natali*, 3), and was commonly represented in the form of a snake, may have been an external soul. See F. B. Jevons, *Plutarch's Roman Questions*, Introd. p. xlvii. *sq.*; *id.*, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 186 *sq.*; Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,² ii. 195 *sq.* The suggestion is not improbable, but the evidence seems hardly conclusive.

souls of her sons and daughters will be tortoises too. So intimately bound up is the life of the man with that of the animal which he regards as his external or bush-soul, that the death or injury of the animal necessarily entails the death or injury of the man. And conversely, when the man dies, his bush-soul can no longer find a place of rest, but goes mad and rushes into the fire or charges people and is knocked on the head, and that is the end of it. When a person is sick, the diviner will sometimes tell him that his bush-soul is angry at being neglected; thereupon the patient will make an offering to the offended spirit and deposit it in a tiny hut in the forest at the spot where the animal, which is his external soul, was last seen. If the bush-soul is appeased, the patient recovers; but if it is not, he dies. Yet the foolish bush-soul does not understand that in injuring the man it injures itself, and that it cannot long survive his decease.¹

Amongst the Zapotecs of Central America, when a woman was about to be confined, her relations assembled in the hut, and began to draw on the floor figures of different animals, rubbing each one out as soon as it was completed. This went on till the moment of birth, and the figure that then remained sketched upon the ground was called the child's *tona* or second self. "When the child grew old enough he procured the animal that represented him and took care of it, as it was believed that health and existence were bound up with that of the animal's, in fact that the death of both would occur simultaneously," or rather that when the animal died the man would die.² Among the

¹ Miss Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 460 *sq.* The lamented authoress was kind enough to give me in conversation (1st June 1897) some details which do not appear in her book; among these are the statements, which I have embodied in the text, that the bush-soul is never a domestic animal, and that when a man knows what kind of animal his bush-soul is, he will not kill an animal of that species and will strongly object to any one else doing so. Miss Kingsley was not able to say whether persons who have the same sort of bush-soul

are allowed or forbidden to marry each other.

² Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific Coast*, i. 661. The words quoted by Bancroft (p. 662, note), "*Consúltese entre ellos la creencia de que su vida está unida a la de un animal, y que es forzoso que mueran ellos cuando éste muere*," are not quite accurately represented by the statement of Bancroft in the text. Elsewhere (vol. ii. p. 277) the same writer calls the "second self" of the Zapotecs a "*nagual*, or tutelary genius," adding that the fate of the child was supposed

Indians of Guatemala and Honduras the *nagual* or *naual* is "that animate or inanimate object, generally an animal, which stands in a parallel relation to a particular man, so that the weal and woe of the man depend on the fate of the *nagual*."¹ According to an old writer, many Indians of Guatemala "are deluded by the devil to believe that their life dependeth upon the life of such and such a beast (which they take unto them as their familiar spirit) and think that when that beast dieth they must die; when he is chased, their hearts pant; when he is faint, they are faint; nay, it happeneth that by the devil's delusion they appear in the shape of that beast (which commonly by their choice is a buck, or doe, a lion, or tigre, or dog, or eagle) and in that shape have been shot at and wounded."² Herrera's account of the way in which the Indians of Honduras acquired their *naguales*, runs thus: "The devil deluded them, appearing in the shape of a lion or a tiger, or a coyote, a beast like a wolf, or in the shape of an alligator, a snake, or a bird, that province abounding in creatures of prey, which they called *naguales*, signifying keepers or guardians, and when the bird died the Indian that was in league with him died also, which often happened and was looked upon as infallible. The manner of contracting this alliance was thus. The Indian repaired to the river, wood, hill, or most obscure place, where he called upon the devils by such names as he thought fit, talked to the rivers, rocks, or woods, said he went to weep that he might have the same his predecessors had, carrying a cock or a dog to sacrifice. In that melancholy fit he fell asleep, and either in a dream or waking saw some one of the aforesaid birds or other creatures, whom he entreated to grant him profit in salt, cacao, or any

to be so intimately bound up with the fortune of the animal that the death of the one involved the death of the other.

¹ Otto Stoll, *Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala* (Leipzig, 1889), p. 57.

² Thomas Gage, *A New Survey of the West Indies*, third edition (London, 1677), p. 334. The same writer relates how a certain Indian named Gonzalez was reported to have the

power of turning himself into a lion or rather a puma. Once when a Spaniard had shot a puma in the nose, Gonzalez was found with a bruised face and accused the Spaniard of having shot him. Another Indian chief named Gomez was said to have transformed himself into a puma, and in that shape to have fought a terrific battle with a rival chief named Lopez, who had changed himself into a jaguar. See Gage, *op. cit.* pp. 383-389.

other commodity, drawing blood from his own tongue, ears, and other parts of his body, making his contract at the same time with the said creature, the which either in a dream or waking told him, 'Such a day you shall go abroad asporting, and I will be the first bird or other animal you shall meet, and will be your *nagual* and companion at all times.' Whereupon such friendship was contracted between them, that when one of them died the other did not survive, and they fancied that he who had no *nagual* could not be rich."¹ The Indians were persuaded that the death of their *nagual* would entail their own. Legend affirms that in the first battles with the Spaniards on the plateau of Quetzaltenango the *naguals* of the Indian chiefs fought in the form of serpents. The *nagual* of the highest chief was especially conspicuous, because it had the form of a great bird, resplendent in green plumage. The Spanish general Pedro de Alvarado killed the bird with his lance, and at the same moment the Indian chief fell dead to the ground.²

In many of the Australian tribes each sex regards a particular species of animals in the same way that a Central American Indian regards his *nagual*, but with this difference, that whereas the Indian apparently knows the individual animal with which his life is bound up, the Australians only know that each of their lives is bound up with some one animal of the species, but they cannot say with which. The result naturally is that every man spares and protects all the animals of the species with which the lives of the men are bound up; and every woman spares and protects all the animals of the species with which the lives of the women are bound up; because no one knows but that the death of any animal of the respective species might entail his or her own;

¹ Herrera, *General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. John Stevens, iv. 138 sq. The Indians of Santa Catalina Istlavacan still receive at birth the name of some animal, which is commonly regarded as their guardian spirit for the rest of their life. The name is bestowed by the heathen priest, who commonly hears of a birth in the village sooner than his Catholic col-

league. See K. Scherzer, "Die Indianer von Santa Catalina Istlavacana (Frauenfuss), ein Beitrag zur Culturgeschichte der Urbewohner Central-Amerikas," *Sitzungsberichte der philos. histor. Classe der kais. Akademie der Wissen.* (Vienna), xviii. (1856), p. 235.

² Otto Stoll, *Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala*, p. 57 sq.

just as the killing of the green bird was immediately followed by the death of the Indian chief, and the killing of the parrot by the death of Punchkin in the fairy tale. Thus, for example, the Wotjobaluk tribe of South-Eastern Australia "held that 'the life of Ngününgünüt (the Bat) is the life of a man, and the life of Yáratgürk (the Nightjar) is the life of a woman,' and that when either of these creatures is killed the life of some man or of some woman is shortened. In such a case every man or every woman in the camp feared that he or she might be the victim, and from this cause great fights arose in this tribe. I learn that in these fights, men on one side and women on the other, it was not at all certain which would be victorious, for at times the women gave the men a severe drubbing with their yamsticks while often women were injured or killed by spears."¹ The particular species of animals with which the lives of the sexes were believed to be respectively bound up varied somewhat from tribe to tribe. Thus whereas among the Wotjobaluk the bat was the animal of the men, at Gunbower Creek on the Lower Murray the bat seems to have been the animal of the women, for the natives would not kill it for the reason that "if it was killed, one of their lubras [women] would be sure to die in consequence."² But the belief itself and the fights to which it gave rise are

¹ A. W. Howitt, "Further Notes on the Australian Class Systems," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xviii. (1889), p. 58. It is very remarkable that among the Kurnai these fights had a special connection with marriage. When young men were backward of taking wives, the women used to go out into the forest and kill an emu-wren, which was the men's "brother"; then returning to the camp they showed the dead bird to the men. The result was a fight between the young men and the young women, in which, however, lads who were not yet marriageable might not take part. Next day the marriageable young men went out and killed a superb warbler, which was the women's "sister," and this led to a worse fight than before. Some days afterwards, when the wounds and bruises were

healed, one of the marriageable young men met one of the marriageable young women, and said, "Superb warbler!" She answered, "Emu-wren! What does the emu-wren eat?" To which the young man answered, "He eats so-and-so," naming kangaroo, opossum, emu, or some other game. Then they laughed, and she ran off with him without telling any one. See Pison and Howitt, *Kanilaroi and Kurnai*, p. 201 *sq.* Perhaps this killing of the sex-totem before marriage may be related to the pretence of killing young men and bringing them to life again at puberty. See below, p. 422 *sq.*

² Gerard Krefft, "Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of the Lower Murray and Darling," *Transact. Philos. Soc. New South Wales*, 1862-65, p. 359 *sq.*

known to have extended over a large part of South-Eastern Australia, and probably they extended much farther.¹ The belief is a very serious one, and so consequently are the fights which spring from it. Thus where the bat is the men's animal they "protect it against injury, even to the half-killing of their wives for its sake"; and where the fern-owl or large goatsucker (a night-bird) is the women's animal, "it is jealously protected by them. If a man kills one, they are as much enraged as if it was one of their children, and will strike him with their long poles."²

The jealous protection thus afforded by Australian men and women to bats and owls respectively (for bats and owls seem to be the creatures usually allotted to the two sexes)³ is not based upon purely selfish considerations. For each man believes that not only his own life but the lives of his father, brothers, sons, and so on are bound up with the lives of particular bats, and that therefore in protecting the bat species he is protecting the lives of all his male relations as well as his own. Similarly, each woman believes that the lives of her mother, sisters, daughters, and so forth, equally with her own, are bound up with the lives of particular owls, and that in guarding the owl species she is guarding the lives of all her female relations besides her own. Now, when men's lives are thus supposed to be contained in certain animals, it is obvious that the animals can hardly be distinguished from the men, or the men from the animals. If my brother John's life is in a bat, then, on the one hand, the bat is my brother as well as John; and, on the other hand, John is in a sense a bat, since his life is in a bat. Similarly, if my sister Mary's life is in an owl, then the owl is my sister and Mary is an owl. This is a natural enough conclusion, and the Australians have not failed to draw it. When the bat is the man's animal, it is called his brother; and when the owl is the woman's animal, it is called her

¹ A. W. Howitt, *loc.*

² Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 52.

³ It is at least remarkable that both the creatures thus assigned to the two sexes should be nocturnal in their habits. Perhaps the choice of such

creatures is connected with the belief that the soul is absent from the body in slumber. On this hypothesis bats and owls would be regarded by these savages as the wandering souls of sleepers. Such a belief would fully account for the reluctance of the natives to kill them.

sister. And conversely a man addresses a woman as an owl, and she addresses him as a bat.¹ So with the other animals allotted to the sexes respectively in other tribes. For example, among the Kurnai all Emu-Wrens were "brothers" of the men, and all the men were Emu-Wrens; all Superb Warblers were "sisters" of the women, and all the women were Superb Warblers.²

But when a savage names himself after an animal, calls it his brother, and refuses to kill it, the animal is said to be his totem. Accordingly the bat and the owl, the Emu-Wren and the Superb Warbler, may properly be described as totems of the sexes. But the assignation of a totem to a sex is comparatively rare, and has hitherto been discovered nowhere but in Australia. Far more commonly the totem is appropriated not to a sex, but to a tribe or clan, and is hereditary either in the male or female line. The relation of an individual to the tribal totem does not differ in kind from his relation to the sex-totem; he will not kill it, he speaks of it as his brother, and he calls himself by its name.³ Now if the

¹ *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xiv. 350, xv. 416, xviii. 57 (the "nightjar" is apparently an owl).

² Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, pp. 194, 201 sq., 215; *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xv. 416, xviii. 56 sq.

³ For a collection of facts on totemism I may refer to my little volume *Totemism* (Edinburgh, 1887). Since that work was published a good deal of fresh evidence has come to light, which I hope at some future time to embody in a new edition of my book. The very important evidence collected by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen among the tribes of Central Australia, since the first edition of *The Golden Bough* was written (*The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, London, 1899), appears to show that the theory of totemism propounded in the text is at most only a partial solution of the problem, and that the totemic system has, at least among these tribes, a much wider scope, its aim being to provide the community with a supply of food and all other necessities by means of certain magical ceremonies, the performance of which is distributed among

the various totem groups. See Spencer and Gillen, "Some remarks on totemism as applied to Australian tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxviii. (1899), pp. 275-280; and my remarks *ibid.* pp. 281-286, and in the *Fortnightly Review*, N.S., lxx. (Jan.-June 1899), pp. 647-665, 835-852. But I have allowed the theory in the text to stand, partly because it is not as yet clear how far the particular theory of totemism suggested by the Central Australian evidence is of general application, and partly because, in the uncertainty which still hangs over the origin and meaning of totemism, it seems scarcely worth while to patch up an old theory which the next new facts may perhaps entirely demolish. Here I will only call attention to the Arunta legend that the ancestors of the tribe kept their spirits in certain sacred sticks and stones (*churinga*), which bear a close resemblance to the well-known bull-roarers, and that when they went out hunting they hung these sticks or stones on certain sacred poles (*unrtunjar*) which represented their totems. See Spencer and Gillen,

relations are similar, the explanation which holds good of the one ought equally to hold good of the other. Therefore the reason why a tribe revere a particular species of animals or plants (for the tribal totem may be a plant) and call themselves after it, would seem to be a belief that the life of each individual of the tribe is bound up with some one animal or plant of the species, and that his or her death would be the consequence of killing that particular animal, or destroying that particular plant. This explanation of totemism squares very well with Sir George Grey's definition of a totem or *kobong* in Western Australia. He says: "A certain mysterious connection exists between a family and its *kobong*, so that a member of the family will never kill an animal of the species to which his *kobong* belongs, should he find it asleep; indeed he always kills it reluctantly, and never without affording it a chance to escape. This arises from the family belief that some one individual of the species is their nearest friend, to kill whom would be a great crime, and to be carefully avoided. Similarly, a native who has a vegetable for his *kobong* may not gather it under certain circumstances, and at a particular period of the year."¹ Here it will be observed that though each man spares all the animals or plants of the species, they are not all equally precious to him; far from it, out of the whole species there is only one which is specially dear to him; but as he does not know which the dear one is, he is obliged to spare them all from fear of injuring the one. Again, this explanation of the tribal totem harmonises with the supposed effect of killing one of the totem species. "One day one of the blacks killed a crow. Three or four days afterwards a Boortwa (crow) [*i.e.* a man of the Crow clan or tribe] named Larry died. He had been ailing for some days, but the killing of his wingong [totem] hastened his death."² Here the killing of the crow caused

Native Tribes of Central Australia, pp. 137 sq., 629. This tradition appears to point to a custom of transferring a man's soul or spirit to his totem. (Note to Second Edition.)

¹ (Sir) George Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia*, ii. 228 sq.

² Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and*

Kurnai, p. 169. According to Mr. Howitt, it is a serious offence to kill the totem of another person "with intent to injure him" (*Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xviii. (1889), p. 53). Such an intention seems to imply a belief in a sympathetic connection between the man and the animal.

the death of a man of the Crow clan, exactly as, in the case of the sex-totems, the killing of a bat causes the death of a Bat-man or the killing of an owl causes the death of an Owl-woman. Similarly, the killing of his *nagual* causes the death of a Central American Indian, the killing of his bush-soul causes the death of a Calabar negro, the killing of his *ihlozi* causes the death of a Zulu, the killing of his *tamanin* causes the death of a Banks Islander, and the killing of the animal in which his life is stowed away causes the death of the giant or warlock in the fairy tale.

Thus it appears that the story of "The giant who had no heart in his body" furnishes the key to the religious aspect of totemism, that is, to the relation which is supposed to subsist between a man and his totem. The totem, if I am right, is simply the receptacle in which a man keeps his life, as Punchkin kept his life in a parrot, and Bidasari kept her soul in a golden fish. It is no valid objection to this view that when a savage has both a sex-totem and a tribal totem his life must be bound up with two different animals, the death of either of which would entail his own. If a man has more vital places than one in his body, why, the savage may think, should he not have more vital places than one outside it? Why, since he can put his life outside himself, should he not transfer one portion of it to one animal and another to another? The divisibility of life, or, to put it otherwise, the plurality of souls, is an idea suggested by many familiar facts, and has commended itself to philosophers like Plato,¹ as well as to savages. It is only when the notion of a soul, from being a quasi-scientific hypothesis, becomes a theological dogma that its unity and indivisibility are insisted upon as essential. The savage, unshackled by dogma, is free to explain the facts of life by the assumption of as many souls as he thinks necessary. Hence, for example, the Caribs supposed that there was one soul in the head, another in the heart, and other souls at all the places where an artery is felt pulsating.² Some of the Hidatsa Indians explain the

¹ According to Plato, the different parts of the soul were lodged in different parts of the body (*Timæus*, pp. 69c-721), and as only one part, on his theory, was immortal, Lucian seems

not unnaturally to have interpreted the Platonic doctrine to mean that every man had more than one soul (*Demonia*, 33).

² De la Borde, "Relation de

phenomena of gradual death, when the extremities appear dead first, by supposing that man has four souls, and that they quit the body, not simultaneously, but one after the other, dissolution being only complete when all four have departed.¹ Some of the Dyaks of Borneo and the Malays of the Peninsula believe that every man has seven souls.² The Alfoors of Poso in Celebes are of opinion that he has three.³ The Laos suppose that the body is the seat of thirty spirits, which reside in the hands, the feet, the mouth, the eyes, and so on.⁴ Hence, from the primitive point of view, it is perfectly possible that a savage should have one soul in his sex-totem, and another in his tribal totem. However, as I have observed, sex-totems have been found nowhere but in Australia; so that as a rule the savage who practises totemism need not have more than one soul out of his body at a time.⁵

l'Origine, etc., des Caraïbes," p. 15, in *Recueil de divers Voyages faits en Afrique et en l'Amérique* (Paris, 1684).

¹ Washington Matthews, *The Hidatsa Indians* (Washington, 1877), p. 50.

² H. Ling Roth, "Low's Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi, (1892), p. 117; W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 50.

³ A. C. Kruijt, "Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschappelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap*, xxxix. (1895), p. 3 sq.

⁴ Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, iii. 248.

⁵ In some tribes, chiefly of North American Indians, every man has an individual or personal totem in addition to the totem of his clan. This personal totem is usually the animal of which he dreamed during a long and solitary fast at puberty (*Totemism*, p. 53 sq.). Among the Shushwap of British Columbia, when a young man has thus obtained his personal totem or guardian spirit, he is supposed to become proof against bullets and arrows (Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 93, separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1890*). Is this because, like the giant of the fairy

tale who cannot be wounded, he has deposited his life or soul in the animal of which he dreamed? If so, it would seem that the personal totem is essentially the receptacle in which the individual deposits his soul, or one of his souls, for safety. It is quite possible that, as some good authorities incline to believe, the clan totem has been developed out of the personal totem by inheritance. See Miss Alice C. Fletcher, *The import of the totem*, p. 3 sqq. (paper read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, August 1887, separate reprint); Fr. Boas, "The Social Organisation and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895*, pp. 323 sq., 336-338, 393. In the bush-sons of the Calabar negroes (see above, p. 410 sq.) we seem to have something like the personal totem on its way to become hereditary and so to grow into the totem of a clan. This origin of the clan totem would not be inconsistent with the theory of totemism suggested by the Central Australian facts (see above, p. 416, note 3); for the intimate relation established between an animal or other natural object and the man who dreamed of it might well be thought to confer, first on the man himself and afterwards on his descendants, a special power over the

If this explanation of the totem as a receptacle in which a man keeps his soul or one of his souls is correct, we should expect to find some totem tribes of whom it is expressly stated that every man amongst them is believed to keep at least one soul permanently out of his body, and that the destruction of this external soul is supposed to entail the death of its owner. Such a tribe are the Battas of Sumatra. The Battas are divided into exogamous clans (*margas*) with descent in the male line; and each clan is forbidden to eat the flesh of a particular animal. One clan may not eat the tiger, another the ape, another the crocodile, another the dog, another the cat, another the dove, another the white buffalo, and another the locust. The reason given by members of a clan for abstaining from the flesh of the particular animal is either that they are descended from animals of that species, and that their souls after death may transmigrate into the animals, or that they or their forefathers have been under certain obligations to the animals. Sometimes, but not always, the clan bears the name of the animal.¹ Thus the Battas have totemism in full. But, further, each Batta believes that he has seven or, on a more moderate computation, three souls. One of these souls is always outside the body, but nevertheless whenever it dies, however far away it may be at the time, that same moment the man dies also.² The writer who mentions this belief says nothing

object, in virtue of which he and they might be entitled and even required to perform magical ceremonies for the multiplication of the animal or the control and direction of the object, whatever it chanced to be. But the discussion of these questions must be reserved for another place.

¹ J. B. Neumann, "Het Pane- en Billa-stroomgebied op het eiland Sumatra," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijks. Genootsch.* Tweede Serie, dl. iii. Afdeeling, meer uitgebreide artikelen, No. 2, p. 311 sq.; *id.*, dl. iv. No. 1, p. 8 sq.; Van Hoëvell, "Iets over 't oorlogvoeren der Battas," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, N.S., vii. (1878), p. 434; G. A. Wilken, *Over de verwantschap en het huwelijks- en erfrecht bij de*

volken van het maleische ras, pp. 20 sq., 36 (reprint from *De Indische Gids*, May 1883); *id.*, *Iets over de Papoeas van de Geelvinksbai*, p. 27 sq. (reprint from *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Ned. Indië*, 5e Volgreeks fl.); *Journal Anthropol. Inst.* ix. (1880), p. 295; Backer, *L'Archipel Indien*, p. 470; Von Brenner, *Beschreibung der Annibalen Sumatras* (Würzburg, 1894), p. 197 sq.

² B. Hagen, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Battareligion," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxviii. 514. J. B. Neumann (*op. cit.* dl. iii. No. 2, p. 299) is the authority for the seven souls. According to another writer, six out of the seven souls reside outside of the body; one of them dwells in heaven, the remaining

about the Batta totems ; but on the analogy of the Australian, Central American, and African evidence we can scarcely avoid concluding that the external soul, whose death entails the death of the man, must be housed in the totem animal or plant.

Against this view it can hardly be thought to militate that the Batta does not in set terms affirm his external soul to be in his totem, but alleges other, though hardly contradictory, grounds for respecting the sacred animal or plant of his clan. For if a savage seriously believes that his life is bound up with an external object, it is in the last degree unlikely that he will let any stranger into the secret. In all that touches his inmost life and beliefs the savage is exceedingly suspicious and reserved ; Europeans have resided among savages for years without discovering some of their capital articles of faith, and in the end the discovery has often been the result of accident. Above all, the savage lives in an intense and perpetual dread of assassination by sorcery ; the most trifling relics of his person—the clippings of his hair and nails, his spittle, the remnants of his food, his very name¹—all these may, he fancies, be turned by the sorcerer to his destruction, and he is therefore anxiously careful to conceal or destroy them. But if in matters such as these, which are but the outposts and outworks of his life, he is so shy and secretive, how close must be the concealment, how impenetrable the reserve in which he enshrouds

five have no definite place of abode, but are so closely related to the man that were they to abandon him his health would suffer. See Von Brenner, *Besuch bei den Kambibulen Sumatras*, p. 239 sq. A different account of Batta psychology is given by Mr. Westenberg. According to him, each Batta has only one *tendi* (not three or seven of them) ; and the *tendi* is something between a soul and a guardian spirit. It always resides outside of the body, and on its position near, before, behind, above, or below, the welfare of its owner is supposed in great measure to depend. But in addition each man has two invisible guardian spirits (his *kaka* and *agi*) whose help he invokes in great danger : one is the seed by which he was begotten, the other is the after-birth,

and these he calls respectively his elder and his younger brother. Mr. Westenberg's account refers specially to the Karo-Battas. See C. J. Westenberg, "Aanteekeningen omtrent de godsdienstige Begrippen der Karo. Bataks," *Bijdragen tot de Taal. Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië*, xli. (1892), p. 228 sq.

¹ It is not merely the personal name which is often shrouded in mystery (see above, vol. i. p. 403 sqq.) ; the names of the clans and their subdivisions are objects of mysterious reverence among many, if not all, of the Siouan tribes, and are never used in ordinary conversation. See J. Owen Dorsey, "Osage Traditions," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 396.

the inner keep and citadel of his being ! When the princess in the fairy tale asks the giant where he keeps his soul, he generally gives false or evasive answers, and it is only after much coaxing and wheedling that the secret is at last wrung from him. In his jealous reticence the giant resembles the timid and furtive savage ; but whereas the exigencies of the story demand that the giant should at last reveal his secret, no such obligation is laid on the savage ; and no inducement that can be offered is likely to tempt him to imperil his soul by revealing its hiding-place to a stranger. It is therefore no matter for surprise that the central mystery of the savage's life should so long have remained a secret, and that we should be left to piece it together from scattered hints and fragments and from the recollections of it which linger in fairy tales.

This view of totemism throws light on a class of religious rites of which no adequate explanation, so far as I am aware, has yet been offered. Amongst many savage tribes, especially such as are known to practise totemism, it is customary for lads at puberty to undergo certain initiatory rites, of which one of the commonest is a pretence of killing the lad and bringing him to life again. Such rites become intelligible if we suppose that their substance consists in extracting the youth's soul in order to transfer it to his totem. For the extraction of his soul would naturally be supposed to kill the youth or at least to throw him into a death-like trance, which the savage hardly distinguishes from death. His recovery would then be attributed either to the gradual recovery of his system from the violent shock which it had received, or, more probably, to the infusion into him of fresh life drawn from the totem. Thus the essence of these initiatory rites, so far as they consist in a simulation of death and resurrection, would be an exchange of life or souls between the man and his totem. The primitive belief in the possibility of such an exchange of souls comes clearly out in the story of the Basque hunter who affirmed that he had been killed by a bear, but that the bear had, after killing him, breathed its own soul into him, so that the bear's body was now dead, but he himself was a bear, being animated by the bear's soul.¹ This revival of the dead hunter as a bear is exactly

¹ Th. Benfey, *Pantschatantra*, i. 128 sq. Similarly a man of the Kulin

analogous to what, if I am right, is supposed to take place in the ceremony of killing a lad at puberty and bringing him to life again. The lad dies as a man and comes to life again as an animal; the animal's soul is now in him, and his human soul is in the animal. With good right, therefore, does he call himself a Bear or a Wolf, etc., according to his totem; and with good right does he treat the bears or the wolves, etc., as his brethren, since in these animals are lodged the souls of himself and his kindred.

Examples of this supposed death and resurrection at initiation are the following. Among some of the Australian tribes of New South Wales, when lads are initiated, it is thought that a being called Thuremlin takes each lad to a distance, kills him, and sometimes cuts him up, after which he restores him to life and knocks out a tooth. In point of fact, a tooth is knocked out of the mouth of every youth on this occasion, and while this is being done a loud humming noise is made by swinging a bull-roarer, that is, a flat piece of wood with serrated edges fastened to a string.¹ In one part of Queensland the humming sound of the bull-roarer, which is swung at the initiatory rites, is said to be the noise made by the wizards in swallowing the boys and bringing them up again as young men. The Ualaroi of the Upper Darling River said that the boy met a ghost which killed him and brought him to life again as a man.² So among the tribes of Central Australia the bull-roarers are swung while a boy is being circumcised, and the women and

tribe in Victoria was called Kurlburr, that is, "native bear," because the spirit of a native bear was supposed to have entered into him when he killed the animal, and to have endowed him with its wonderful cleverness. This I learn from Miss E. B. Howitt's *Folklore and Legends of some Victorian Tribes* (chapter vi.), which I have been privileged to see in manuscript. Among the Chiquites Indians of Paraguay sickness was sometimes accounted for by supposing that the soul of a deer or a turtle had entered into the patient (*Letters édifiantes et curieuses*, viii. 339). We have seen (p. 412 sq.) that the Indians of Honduras made an alliance with the animal that was to be their

nagual by offering some of their own blood to it. Conversely the North American Indian kills the animal which is to be his personal totem, and thenceforth wears some part of the creature as an amulet (*Totemism*, p. 54). These facts seem to point to the establishment of a blood covenant, involving an interchange of life between a man and his personal totem or *nagual*.

¹ A. L. P. Cameron, "Notes on some Tribes of New South Wales," *Journ. Anthropol. Instit.* xiv. (1885), p. 358.

² A. W. Howitt, "On Australian Medicine Men," *Journ. Anthropol. Instit.* xvi. (1887), p. 47 sq.

children believe that the roaring noise is the voice of the great spirit Twanyirika, who has come to take the boy away. Twanyirika enters the body of the boy and carries him off into the bush until his wound is healed, when the spirit goes away and the boy returns an initiated man.¹ The resurrection to a new life appears to be represented at the initiatory rites of some tribes of South-Eastern Australia by the following ceremony. An old man, disguised with stringy bark fibre, lies down in a grave, and is lightly

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 246. On the bull-roarer, see A. Lang, *Custom and Myth*, pp. 29-44 (first edition); J. D. E. Schmelz, *Das Schwirrholtz* (Hamburg, 1896); A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man*, pp. 277-327. I offered some remarks on this subject in a paper contributed to the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, January 1900. The religious or magical use of the bull-roarer is best known in Australia (see for example Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, pp. 267-269; A. W. Howitt, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xiv. (1885), pp. 312 sq., 315, xx. (1891), p. 83; R. H. Mathews, *ibid.* xxvii. (1898), pp. 52-60); but in the essay just referred to Mr. Andrew Lang showed that the instrument has been similarly employed not only by savages in various parts of the world, but also by the ancient Greeks in their religious mysteries. As a sacred or magical instrument it occurs in Southern and Western Africa (Theal, *Kaffir Folk-lore*, p. 222 sq.; R. F. Burton, *Abeskuta and the Cameroons Mountains*, i. 197 sq.; Bonche, *La Côte des Esclaves*, p. 124; A. B. Ellis, *Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. 110; Mrs. Baily and Governor Moliney, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xix. (1890), pp. 162-164); among the Tusayan, Apache, and Navajo Indians of the United States (J. G. Bourke, in *Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Washington, 1892, pp. 476-478); among the Koskimo of British Columbia (Fr. Boas, "Social organisation, etc., of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895*, p. 610); among the Bororo of

Central Brazil (K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 497 sqq., cp. p. 327 sq.); in various parts of New Guinea (J. Chalmers, *Pioneering in New Guinea*, p. 85; *id.*, "Toaripi," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xxvii. (1898), p. 329; O. Schellong, "Das Barlum-fest der Gegend Finsch-hafens," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889), pp. 150 sq., 154 sq.; F. Grabowsky, "Der Bezirk von Hatzfeldthafen und seine Bewohner," *Petermanns Mittheilungen*, xli. (1895), p. 189); in some of the islands of Torres Straits (A. C. Haddon, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xix. (1890), pp. 406, 432, and in *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, vi. (1893), pp. 150 sq., 153); in the Melanesian island of Florida (R. C. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, pp. 98 sq., 342, cp. p. 267); in the North-Western Solomon Islands (R. Parkinson, *Zur Ethnographie der nordwestlichen Salomo Inseln*, Berlin, 1899, p. 11); and among the Minangkabauers of Sumatra (J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land- en Volkskunde van Nederlandisch Indië*, xxxix. (1890), p. 55 sq.). In the present connection it is worthy of note that among the Minangkabauers the bull-roarer is used to induce the demons to carry off the soul of a woman and so drive her mad. It is made of the frontal bone of a brave or skilful man, and some of the intended victim's hair is attached to it. Among the Koskimo (see above) the noise of the bull-roarer is supposed to be the voice of the spirit who has come to carry away a novice.

covered up with sticks and earth, and as far as possible the natural appearance of the ground is restored, the excavated earth being carried away. The buried man holds a small bush in his hand; it appears to be growing in the soil, and other bushes are stuck in the ground to heighten the effect. The novices are then brought to the edge of the grave, and a song is sung, in which the only words used are the "class-name" of the buried man and the word for stringy bark fibre. Gradually, as the song continues, the bush held by the buried man begins to quiver and then to move more and more, and finally the man himself starts up from the grave.¹ Similarly, Fijian lads at initiation were shown a row of apparently dead men, covered with blood, their bodies seemingly cut open, and their entrails protruding. But at a yell from the priest the pretended dead men sprang to their feet and ran to the river to cleanse themselves from the blood and entrails of pigs with which they had been besmeared.²

In the valley of the Congo initiatory rites of this sort are common. In some places they are called Ndembo. "In the practice of Ndembo the initiating doctors get some one to fall down in a pretended fit, and in that state he is carried away to an enclosed place outside the town. This is called 'dying Ndembo.' Others follow suit, generally boys and girls, but often young men and women. . . . They are supposed to have died. But the parents and friends supply food, and after a period varying, according to custom, from three months to three years, it is arranged that the

¹ A. W. Howitt, "On some Australian ceremonies of initiation," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xiii. (1884), p. 453 sq. The "class-name" is the name of the totemic division to which the man belongs. In the Arunta tribe of Central Australia a man who is preparing to be a wizard repairs to a cave which is haunted by the ancestral spirits. One of these spirits is supposed to kill him with a lance, take out all his internal organs, and provide him with a new set, after which he comes to life again, but in a state of insanity. When he has partially recovered, he is led home by the spirit, who remains in-

visible to all but a few gifted wizards and to the dogs. For several days afterwards, the new wizard continues more or less strange in his appearance and behaviour. See Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 523 sq.; F. J. Gillen, in *Report of the Horn Scientific Expedition*, Part iv. p. 180 sq.

² L. Fison, "The Nanga, or sacred stone enclosure of Wainimla, Fiji," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xiv. (1885), p. 22; A. B. Joske, "The Nanga of Vilevu," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889), p. 264 sq.

doctor shall bring them to life again. . . . When the doctor's fee has been paid, and money (goods) saved for a feast, the *Ndembo* people are brought to life. At first they pretend to know no one and nothing; they do not even know how to masticate food, and friends have to perform that office for them. They want everything nice that any one uninitiated may have, and beat them if it is not granted, or even strangle and kill people. They do not get into trouble for this, because it is thought that they do not know better. Sometimes they carry on the pretence of talking gibberish, and behaving as if they had returned from the spirit-world. After this they are known by another name, peculiar to those who have 'died Ndembo.' . . . We hear of the custom far along on the upper river, as well as in the cataract region."¹ Mr. Herbert Ward informs us that the course of initiation among the natives of this region lasts from six months to two years, according to the tribal custom. During all this time the novices are not allowed to wash themselves; they smother their bodies with chalks of various colours and wear a costume made of grass. All lads of ten or twelve years of age may go through the course, and most of them do so. At the ceremony of induction the candidate is required to drink a certain potion which renders him insensible. He is then declared to be dead and is carried away into the forest, and there circumcised. After a while he is restored to consciousness, and the simple villagers believe that he has been raised from the dead. Next he receives a new name and professes not to be able to remember his former tribe or even his parents. The initiated form a privileged order called N'Kimba.² From another account given by the same writer it would seem that in some places rites of this sort are only resorted to when the elders of a village consider that the women are not bearing enough children. Upon this an

¹ W. H. Bentley, *Life on the Congo* (London, 1887), p. 78 sq. Compare *id.*, *Pioneering on the Congo* (London, 1900), ii. 282-287. During their seclusion in the stockade outside the town the bodies of the novices are supposed to decompose and decay till only one bone of each of them is left in charge of the wizard. An attempt

is made to teach them a secret language, but the vocabulary is said to be small and to show little ingenuity. Both sexes live together in the stockade and the grossest immorality prevails.

² Herbert Ward, *Five Years with the Congo Cannibals* (London, 1890), p. 54 sq.

N'Kimba is proclaimed, and the sorcerers and other celebrants of the rite betake themselves to a lonely wood. Here they are soon joined by voluntary candidates for initiation. Boys and men of any age are eligible, also girls and women who have not borne a child. Full sexual license is permitted. At initiation the body of the candidate is painted with white chalk; he is supposed to die, to be raised from the dead, and then to enter upon a new life. The initiated speak a complicated language. At the conclusion of these rites, which usually last five or six years, the members of the craft take new names and pretend to have forgotten their former life; they even feign not to recognise their parents and friends.¹ The following account of the rites, as practised in this part of Africa, was given to Adolf Bastian by an interpreter. "In the land of Ambamba every one must die once, and when the fetish priest shakes his calabash against a village, all the men and lads whose hour is come fall into a state of lifeless torpidity, from which they generally awake after three days. But if the fetish loves a man he carries him away into the bush and buries him in the fetish house, often for many years. When he comes to life again, he begins to eat and drink as before, but his understanding is gone and the fetish man must teach him and direct him in every motion, like the smallest child. At first this can only be done with a stick, but gradually his senses return, so that it is possible to talk with him, and when his education is complete, the priest brings him back to his parents. They would seldom recognise their son but for the express assurances of the fetish priest, who moreover recalls previous events to their memory. He who has not gone through the ceremony of the new birth in Ambamba is universally looked down upon and is not admitted to the dances." During the period of initiation the novice is sympathetically united to the fetish by which his life is thenceforward determined.² The novice, plunged in the magic sleep or death-like trance within the sacred hut, "beholds a bird or other object with which his existence is henceforth sympathetically bound

¹ Herbert Ward, "Ethnographical Notes relating to the Congo Tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*,

xxiv. (1895), p. 288 sq.

² A. Bastian, *Ein Besuch in San Salvador*, pp. 82 sq., 86.

up, just as the life of the young Indian is bound up with the animal which he sees in his dreams at puberty."¹

Rites of this sort were formerly observed in Quoja, on the west coast of Africa, to the north of the Congo. They are thus described by an old writer:—"They have another ceremony which they call Belli-Paaro, but it is not for everybody. For it is an incorporation in the assembly of the spirits, and confers the right of entering their groves, that is to say, of going and eating the offerings which the simple folk bring thither. The initiation or admission to the Belli-Paaro is celebrated every twenty or twenty-five years. The initiated recount marvels of the ceremony, saying that they are roasted, that they entirely change their habits and life, and that they receive a spirit quite different from that of other people and quite new lights. The badge of membership consists in some lines traced on the neck between the shoulders; the lines seem to be pricked with a needle. Those who have this mark pass for persons of spirit, and when they have attained a certain age they are allowed a voice in 'all public assemblies; whereas the uninitiated are regarded as profane, impure, and ignorant persons, who dare not express an opinion on any subject of importance. When the time for the ceremony has come, it is celebrated as follows. By order of the king a place is appointed in the forest, whither they bring the youths who have not been marked, not without much crying and weeping; for it is impressed upon the youths that in order to undergo this change it is necessary to suffer death. So they dispose of their property, as if it were all over with them. There are always some of the initiated beside the novices to instruct them. They teach them to dance a certain dance called *killing*, and to sing verses in praise of Belli. Above all, they are very careful not to let them die of hunger, because if they did so, it is much to be feared that the spiritual resurrection would profit them nothing. This manner of life lasts five or six years, and is comfortable

¹ Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, ii. 183; cp. *id.*, pp. 15-18, 30 sq. On these initiatory rites in the Congo region see also (Sir) H. Johnston in *Proceedings of*

the Royal Geographical Society, N.S., v. (1883), p. 572 sq., and in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xiii. (1884), p. 472; E. Delmar Morgan, in *Proceed. Royal Geogr. Soc.* N.S., vi. 193.

enough, for there is a village in the forest, and they amuse themselves with hunting and fishing. Other lads are brought thither from time to time, so that the last comers have not long to stay. No woman or uninitiated person is suffered to pass within four or five leagues of the sacred wood. When their instruction is completed, they are taken from the wood and shut up in small huts made for the purpose. Here they begin once more to hold communion with mankind and to talk with the women who bring them their food. It is amusing to see their affected simplicity. They pretend to know no one, and to be ignorant of all the customs of the country, such as the customs of washing themselves, rubbing themselves with oil, and so forth. When they enter these huts, their bodies are all covered with the feathers of birds, and they wear caps of bark which hang down before their faces. But after a time they are dressed in clothes and taken to a great open place, where all the people of the neighbourhood are assembled. Here the novices give the first proof of their capacity by dancing a dance which is called the dance of Belli. After the dance is over, the novices are taken to the houses of their parents by their instructors."¹ Miss Kingsley informs us that "the great point of agreement between all these West African secret societies lies in the methods of initiation. The boy, if he belongs to a tribe that goes in for tattooing, is tattooed, and is handed over to instructors in the societies' secrets and formulae. He lives, with the other boys of his tribe undergoing initiation, usually under the rule of several instructors, and for the space of one year. He lives always in the forest, and is naked and smeared with clay. The boys are exercised so as to become inured to hardship; in some districts they make raids so as to perfect themselves in this useful accomplishment. They always take a new name, and are supposed by the initiation process to become new beings in the magic wood, and on their return to their village

¹ Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, p. 268 *sq.* Dapper's account has been abridged in the text. Among the Bondeis, a tribe on the coast of East Africa, opposite to the island of Pemba, one of the rites of initiation into manhood consists in a pretence of slaying one of the lads with a sword; the

entrails of a fowl are placed on the boy's stomach to make the mock killing seem more real. See G. Dale, "Customs and habits of the natives inhabiting the Bondei country," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxv. (1896), p. 189.

at the end of their course, they pretend to have entirely forgotten their life before they entered the wood; but this pretence is not kept up beyond the period of festivities given to welcome them home. They all learn, to a certain extent, a new language, a secret language only understood by the initiated. The same removal from home and instruction from initiated members is observed also with the girls. However, in their case, it is not always a forest-grove they are secluded in; sometimes it is done in huts. Among the Grain Coast tribes, however, the girls go into a magic wood until they are married. Should they have to leave the wood for any temporary reason, they must smear themselves with white clay. A similar custom holds good in Okÿon, Calahar district, where, should a girl have to leave the fattening-house, she must be covered with white clay."¹

Among the Indians of Virginia, an initiatory ceremony, called *Huskanaw*, took place every sixteen or twenty years, or oftener, as the young men happened to grow up. The youths were kept in solitary confinement in the woods for several months, receiving no food but an infusion of some intoxicating roots, so that they went raving mad, and continued in this state eighteen or twenty days. "Upon this occasion it is pretended that these poor creatures drink so much of the water of Lethe that they perfectly lose the remembrance of all former things, even of their parents, their treasure, and their language. When the doctors find that they have drunk sufficiently of the Wysoccan (so they call this mad potion), they gradually restore them to their senses again by lessening the intoxication of their diet; but before they are perfectly well they bring them back into their towns, while they are still wild and crazy through the violence of the medicine. After this they are very fearful of discovering anything of their former remembrance; for if such a thing should happen to any of them, they must immediately be *Huskanaw'd* again; and the second time the usage is so severe that seldom any one escapes with life. Thus they

¹ Miss Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 531. Perhaps the smearing with clay may be intended to indicate that the novices have undergone the new birth; for the negro

child, though born reddish-brown, soon turns slaty-grey (E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 67), which would answer well enough to the hue of the clay-bedaubed novices.

must pretend to have forgot the very use of their tongues, so as not to be able to speak, nor understand anything that is spoken, till they learn it again. Now, whether this be real or counterfeit, I don't know; but certain it is that they will not for some time take notice of anybody nor anything with which they were before acquainted, being still under the guard of their keepers, who constantly wait upon them everywhere till they have learnt all things perfectly over again. Thus they unlive their former lives, and commence men by forgetting that they ever have been boys."¹

Among some of the Indian tribes of North America there exist certain religious associations which are only open to candidates who have gone through a pretence of being killed and brought to life again. In 1766 or 1767 Captain Carver witnessed the admission of a candidate to an association called "the friendly society of the Spirit" among the Naudowessies. The candidate knelt before the chief, who told him that "he himself was now agitated by the same spirit which he should in a few moments communicate to him; that it would strike him dead, but that he would instantly be restored again to life; to this he added, that the communication, however terrifying, was a necessary introduction to the advantages enjoyed by the community into which he was on the point of being admitted. As he spoke this, he appeared to be greatly agitated, till at last his emotions became so violent that his countenance was distorted and his whole frame convulsed. At this juncture he threw something that appeared both in shape and colour like a small bean at the young man, which seemed to enter his mouth, and he instantly fell as motionless as if he had been shot." For a time the man lay like dead, but under a shower of blows he showed signs of consciousness, and finally, discharging from his mouth the bean, or whatever it was the chief had thrown at him, he came to life.² In other tribes, for example, the

¹ (Beverley's) *History of Virginia* (London, 1722), p. 177 sq. Compare J. Bricknell, *The Natural History of North Carolina* (Dublin, 1737), p. 405 sq.

² J. Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* (Lon-

don, 1781), pp. 271-275. The thing thrown at the man and afterwards vomited by him was probably not a bean but a small white sea-shell (*Cypraea moneta*). See Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, iii. 287; J. G. Kohl, *Kitschigami*, i. 71; *Seventh Annual Report*

Ojebways, Winnebagoes, and Dacotas or Sioux, the instrument by which the candidate is apparently slain is the medicine-bag. The bag is made of the skin of an animal (such as the otter, wild cat, serpent, bear, raccoon, wolf, owl, weasel), of which it roughly preserves the shape. Each member of the society has one of these bags, in which he keeps the odds and ends that make up his "medicine" or charms. "They believe that from the miscellaneous contents in the belly of the skin bag or animal there issues a spirit or breath, which has the power, not only to knock down and kill a man, but also to set him up and restore him to life." The mode of killing a man with one of these medicine-bags is to thrust it at him; he falls like dead, but a second thrust of the bag restores him to life.¹ Among the Dacotas the institution of the medicine-bag or mystery-sack was attributed to Onktehi, the great spirit of the waters, who ordained that the bag should consist of the skin of the otter, raccoon, weasel, squirrel, or loon, or a species of fish and of serpents. Further, he decreed that the bag should contain four sorts of medicines of magical qualities, which should represent fowls, quadrupeds, herbs, and trees. Accordingly, swan's down, buffalo hair, grass roots, and bark from the roots of trees are kept by the Dacotas in their medicine-bags. From this combination there proceeds a magical influence (*tonwan*) so powerful that no human being can of his own strength withstand it. When the god of the waters had prepared the first medicine-bag, he tested its powers on four candidates for initiation, who all perished under the shock. So he consulted with his wife, the goddess of the earth, and by holding up his left hand and pattering on the back of it

of the Bureau of Ethnology (Washington, 1891), pp. 191, 215; *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1896), p. 101.

¹ Carver, *op. cit.* p. 277 sq.; Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, iii, 287 (as to the Winnebagoes), v. 430 sqq. (as to the Chippeways and Sioux); Kohl, *Kitschi-Gami*, i. 64-70 (as to the Ojebways). For a very detailed account of the Ojebway ceremonies, see W. J. Hoffman, "The Midewiwin or Grand Medicine Society of the

Ojibwa," *Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1891), especially pp. 215 sq., 234 sq., 248, 265. For similar ceremonies among the Menomini, see *id.*, "The Menomini Indians," *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1896), pp. 99-102; and among the Omahas, see J. Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), pp. 342-346.

with the right, he produced myriads of little shells, whose virtue is to restore life to those who have been slain by the medicine-bag. Having taken this precaution, the god chose four other candidates and repeated the experiment of initiation with success, for after killing them with the bag he immediately resuscitated them by throwing one of the shells into their vital parts, while he chanted certain words assuring them that it was only sport and bidding them rise to their feet. That is why to this day every initiated Dakota has one of these shells in his body. Such was the divine origin of the medicine-dance of the Dakotas. The initiation takes place in a special tent. The candidate, after being steamed in the vapour-bath for four successive days, plants himself on a pile of blankets, and behind him stands an aged member of the order. "Now the master of the ceremonies, with the joints of his knees and hips considerably bent, advances with an unsteady, uncouth hitching, sack in hand, wearing an aspect of desperate energy, and uttering his 'Héen, heen, heen' with frightful emphasis, while all around are enthusiastic demonstrations of all kinds of wild passions. At this point the sack is raised near a painted spot on the breast of the candidate, at which the *tonwan* is discharged. At the instant the brother from behind gives him a push and he falls dead, and is covered with blankets. Now the frenzied dancers gather around, and in the midst of bewildering and indescribable noises, chant the words uttered by the god at the institution of the ceremony, as already recorded. Then the master throws off the covering, and chewing a piece of the bone of the Onktehi, spirts it over him, and he begins to show signs of returning life. Then as the master pats energetically upon the breast of the initiated person, he, convulsed, strangling, struggling, and agonizing, heaves up the shell which falls from his mouth on a sack placed in readiness to receive it. Life is restored and entrance effected into the awful mysteries. He belongs henceforth to the medicine-dance, and has a right to enjoy the medicine-feast."¹

¹ G. H. Pond, "Dakota superstitions," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society for the year 1867*

(Saint Paul, 1867), pp. 35, 37-40. A similar but abridged account of the Dakota tradition and usage is given by

A ceremony witnessed by Jewitt during his captivity among the Indians of Nootka Sound doubtless belongs to this class of customs. The Indian king or chief "discharged a pistol close to his son's ear, who immediately fell down as if killed, upon which all the women of the house set up a most lamentable cry, tearing handfuls of hair from their heads, and exclaiming that the prince was dead; at the same time a great number of the inhabitants rushed into the house armed with their daggers, muskets, etc., inquiring the cause of their outcry. These were immediately followed by two others dressed in wolf-skins, with masks over their faces representing the head of that animal. The latter came in on their hands and feet in the manner of a beast, and taking up the prince, carried him off upon their backs, retiring in the same manner as they entered."¹ In another place Jewitt mentions that the young prince—a lad of about eleven years of age—wore a mask in imitation of a wolf's head.² Now, as the Indians of this part of America are divided into totem clans, of which the Wolf clan is one of the principal, and as the members of each clan are in the habit of wearing some portion of the totem animal about their person,³ it is probable that the prince belonged to the Wolf clan, and that the ceremony described by Jewitt represented the killing of the lad in order that he might be born anew as a wolf, much in the same way that the Basque hunter supposed himself to have been killed and to have come to life again as a bear.

This conjectural explanation of the ceremony has, since it was first put forward, been confirmed by the researches of Dr. Fr. Boas among these Indians; though it would seem that the community to which the chief's son thus obtained admission was not so much a totem clan as a secret society called *Tlokoala*, whose members imitated wolves. The

S. R. Riggs in his *Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography* (Washington, 1893), pp. 227-229, (*Contributions to North American Ethnology*, vol. ix.).

¹ *Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt* (Middletown, 1820), p. 119.

² *Id.*, p. 44. For the age of the prince, see *id.*, p. 35.

³ Holmberg, "Ueber die Völker des russischen Amerika," *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicæ*, iv. (Helsingfors, 1856), pp. 292 sqq., 328; Petroff, *Report on the Population, etc., of Alaska*, p. 165 sq.; A. Krause, *Die Tlinkit-Indianer*, p. 112; R. C. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, pp. 257 sq., 268.

name Tlokoala is a foreign word among the Nootka Indians, having been borrowed by them from the Kwakiutl Indians, in whose language the word means the finding of a *manitoo* or personal totem. The Nootka tradition runs that this secret society was instituted by wolves who took away a chief's son and tried to kill him, but, failing to do so, became his friends, taught him the rites of the society, and ordered him to teach them to his friends on his return home. Then they carried the young man back to his village. They also begged that whenever he moved from one place to another he would kindly leave behind him some red cedar-bark to be used by them in their own ceremonies; and to this custom the Nootka tribes still adhere. Every new member of the society must be initiated by the wolves. At night a pack of wolves, personated by Indians dressed in wolf-skins and wearing wolf-masks, make their appearance, seize the novice, and carry him into the woods. When the wolves are heard outside the village, coming to fetch away the novice, all the members of the society blacken their faces and sing, "Among all the tribes is great excitement, because am Tlokoala." Next day the wolves bring back the novice dead, and the members of the society have to revive him. The wolves are supposed to have put a magic stone into his body, which must be removed before he can come to life. Till this is done the pretended corpse is left lying outside the house. Two wizards go and remove the stone, which appears to be quartz, and then the novice is resuscitated.¹ Among the Niska Indians of British Columbia, who are divided into four principal clans with the raven, the wolf, the eagle, and the bear for their respective totems, the novice at initiation is always brought back by an artificial totem animal. Thus when a man was about to be initiated into a secret society called Olala, his friends drew their knives and pretended to kill him. In reality they let him slip away, while they cut off the head

¹ Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 47 sq. (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1890*); *id.*, "The social organisation and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895*, p. 632 sq.

But while the initiation described in the text was into a wolf society, not into a wolf clan, it is to be observed that the wolf is one of the regular totems of the Nootka Indians. See F. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 32.

of a dummy which had been adroitly substituted for him. Then they laid the decapitated dummy down and covered it over, and the women began to mourn and wail. His relations gave a funeral banquet and solemnly burnt the effigy. In short, they held a regular funeral. For a whole year the novice remained absent and was seen by none but members of the secret society. But at the end of that time he came back alive, carried by an artificial animal which represented his totem.¹ In these ceremonies the essence of the rite appears to be the killing of the novice in his character of a man and his restoration to life in the form of the animal which is thenceforward to be, if not his guardian spirit, at least linked to him in a peculiarly intimate relation. It is to be remembered that the Indians of Guatemala, whose life was bound up with an animal, were supposed to have the power of appearing in the shape of the particular creature with which they were thus sympathetically united.² Hence it seems not unreasonable to conjecture that in like manner the Indians of British Columbia may imagine that their life depends on the life of some one of that species of creature to which they assimilate themselves by their costume. At least if that is not an article of belief with the Columbian Indians of the present day, it may very well have been so with their ancestors in the past, and thus may have helped to mould the rites and ceremonies both of the totem clans and of the secret societies. For though these two sorts of communities differ in respect of the mode in which membership of them is obtained—a man being born into his totem clan but admitted into a secret society later in life—we can hardly

¹ Ft. Boas, in *Tenth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 49 sq., 58 sq. (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1895*). It is remarkable, however, that in this tribe persons who are being initiated into the secret societies, of which there are six, are not always or even generally brought back by an artificial animal which represents their own totem. Thus white men of the eagle totem are brought back by an eagle which rises from underground, men of the bear clan return on the back of an artificial killer-whale which

is towed across the river by ropes. Again, members of the wolf clan are brought back by an artificial bear, and members of the raven clan by a frog. In former times the appearance of the artificial totem animal, or of the guardian spirit, was considered a matter of great importance, and any failure which disclosed the deception to the uninitiated was deemed a grave misfortune which could only be atoned for by the death of the persons concerned in the disclosure.

² See above, p. 412.

doubt that they are near akin and have their root in the same mode of thought.¹ That thought, if I am right, is the possibility of establishing a sympathetic relation with an animal, a spirit, or other mighty being, with whom a man deposits for safe-keeping his soul or some part of it, and from whom he receives in return a gift of magical powers.

The Carrier Indians, who dwell further inland than the tribes we have just been considering, are divided into four clans with the grouse, the beaver, the toad, and the grizzly bear for their totems. But in addition to these clan totems the tribe recognised a considerable number of what Father Morice calls honorific totems, which could be acquired, through the performance of certain rites, by any person who wished to improve his social position. Each totem clan had a certain number of honorific totems or crests, and these might be assumed by any member of the clan who fulfilled the required conditions; but they could not be acquired by members of another clan. Thus the Grouse clan had for its honorific totems or crests the owl, the moose, the weasel, the crane, the wolf, the full moon, the wind, and so on; the Toad clan had the sturgeon, the porcupine, the wolverine, the red-headed woodpecker, the "darding knife," and so forth; the Beaver clan had the mountain-goat for one of its honorific totems; and the goose was a honorific totem of the Grizzly Bear clan. But the common bear, as a honorific totem or crest, might be assumed by anybody, whatever his clan. The common possession of a honorific totem appears to have constituted the same sort of bond among the Carrier Indians as the membership of a secret society does among

¹ This is the opinion of Dr. F. Boas, who writes: "The close similarity between the clan legends and those of the acquisition of spirits presiding over secret societies, as well as the intimate relation between these and the social organizations of the tribes, allow us to apply the same argument to the consideration of the growth of the secret societies, and lead us to the conclusion that the same psychological factor that molded the clans into their present shape molded the secret societies" ("The social organization and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl In-

dians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895*, p. 662). Compare my *Totemism*, p. 49 sqq. Dr. Boas would see in the acquisition of a *manitou* or personal totem the origin both of the secret societies and of the totem clan; for according to him the totem of the clan is merely the *manitou* or personal totem of the ancestor transmitted by inheritance to his descendants. As I have already indicated (p. 419, note 5), I see nothing in this view which is inconsistent with the theory of totemism here advocated.

the coast tribes of British Columbia; certainly the rites of initiation were similar. This will be clear from Father Morice's account of the performances, which I will subjoin in his own words. "The connection of the individual with his crest appeared more especially during ceremonial dances, when the former, attired, if possible, with the spoils of the latter, was wont to personate it in the gaze of an admiring assemblage. On all such occasions, man and totem were also called by the same name. The adoption of any such 'rite' or crest was usually accompanied by initiatory ceremonies or observances corresponding to the nature of the crest, followed in all cases by a distribution of clothes to all present. Thus whenever anybody resolved upon getting received as *Lulem* or Bear, he would, regardless of the season, divest himself of all his wearing apparel and don a bear skin, whereupon he would dash into the woods there to remain for the space of three or four days and nights in deference to the wonts of his intended totem animal. Every night a party of his fellow-villagers would sally out in search of the missing 'bear.' To their loud calls: *Yi! Ketulem* (Come on, Bear!) he would answer by angry growls in imitation of the bear. The searching party making for the spot where he had been heard, would find by a second call followed by a similar answer that he had dexterously shifted to some opposite quarter in the forest. As a rule, he could not be found, but had to come back of himself, when he was speedily apprehended and conducted to the ceremonial lodge, where he would commence his first bear-dance in conjunction with all the other totem people, each of whom would personate his own particular totem. Finally would take place the *potlach* [distribution of property] of the newly initiated 'bear,' who would not forget to present his captor with at least a whole dressed skin. The initiation of the 'Darding Knife' was quite a theatrical performance. A lance was prepared which had a very sharp point so arranged that the slightest pressure on its tip would cause the steel to gradually sink into the shaft. In the sight of the multitude crowding the lodge, this lance was pressed on the bare chest of the candidate and apparently sunk in his body to the shaft, when he would tumble down simulating death. At the same time a

quantity of blood—previously kept in the mouth—would issue from the would-be corpse, making it quite clear to the uninitiated gazers-on that the terrible knife had had its effect, when lo! upon one of the actors striking up one of the chants specially made for the circumstance and richly paid for, the candidate would gradually rise up a new man, the particular *protégé* of the 'Darding Knife.'"¹ In the former of these initiatory rites the prominent feature is the transformation of the man into his totem animal; in the latter it is his death and resurrection. But in substance, probably, both are identical. In both the novice dies as a man and revives as his totem, whether that be a bear, a "darding" knife, or what not; in other words, he has deposited his life or some portion of it in his totem, with which accordingly for the future he is more or less completely identified. Hard as it may be for us to conceive why a man should choose to identify himself with a knife, whether "darding" or otherwise, we have to remember that in Celebes it is to a chopping-knife or other iron tool that the soul of a woman in labour is transferred for safety;² and the difference between a chopping-knife and a "darding" knife, considered as a receptacle for a human soul, is perhaps not very material. Among the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia warriors who had a knife, an arrow, or any other weapon for their personal totem or guardian spirit, enjoyed this signal advantage over their fellows that they were for all practical purposes invulnerable. If an arrow did hit them, which seldom happened, they vomited the blood up, and the hurt soon healed. Hence these bomb-proof warriors rarely wore armour, which would indeed have been superfluous, and they generally took the most dangerous posts in battle. So convinced were the Thompson River Indians of the power of their personal totem or guardian spirit to bring them back to life, that some of them killed themselves in the sure hope that the spirit would immediately

¹ A. G. Morice, "Notes, archaeological, industrial, and sociological, on the Western Dénés," *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, iv. (1892-93), pp. 203-206. The honorific totems of the Carrier Indians may perhaps correspond in some measure to the

sub-totems or multiplex totems of the Australians. As to these latter see my *Totemism*, pp. 85-87, and "The origin of Totemism," *Fortnightly Review*, N.S., lxx. (1899), pp. 848-850.

² See above, p. 389.

raise them up from the dead. Others, more prudently, experimented on their friends, shooting them dead and then awaiting more or less cheerfully their joyful resurrection. We are not told that success crowned these experimental demonstrations of the immortality of the soul.¹

The Toukaway Indians of Texas, one of whose totems is the wolf, have a ceremony in which men, dressed in wolf-skins, run about on all fours, howling and mimicking wolves. At last they scratch up a living tribesman, who has been hurried on purpose, and putting a how and arrows in his hands, bid him do as the wolves do—rob, kill, and murder.² The ceremony probably forms part of an initiatory rite like the resurrection from the grave of the old man in the Australian rites.

The people of Rook, an island to the east of New Guinea, hold festivals at which one or two disguised men, their heads covered with wooden masks, go dancing through the village, followed by all the other men. They demand that the circumcised boys who have not yet been swallowed by Marsaba (the devil) shall be given up to them. The boys, trembling and shrieking, are delivered to them, and must creep between the legs of the disguised men. Then the procession moves through the village again, and announces that Marsaba has eaten up the boys, and will not disgorge them till he receives a present of pigs, taro, and so forth. So all the villagers, according to their means, contribute provisions, which are then consumed in the name of Marsaba.³ In New Britain all males are members of an association called the Duk-duk. The boys are admitted to it very young, but are not fully initiated till their fourteenth year, when they receive from the Tuhuvan a terrible blow with a cane, which is supposed to kill them. The Tubuvan and the Duk-duk are two disguised

¹ James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. ii. part iv. p. 357.

² Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, v. 683. In a letter dated 16th Dec. 1887, Mr. A. S. Gatschet, of the Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, writes to me: "Among the Toukawe whom in 1884 I found at Fort Griffin [?], Texas, I

noticed that they never kill the big or grey wolf, *hatchukunfn*, which has a mythological signification, 'holding the earth' (*hatch*). He forms one of their totem clans, and they have had a dance in his honor, danced by the males only, who carried sticks."

³ Reina, "Ueber die Bewohner der Insel Rook," *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Ethnologie*, N.F., iv. (1858), p. 356 sq.

men who represent cassowaries. They dance with a short hopping step in imitation of the cassowary. Each of them wears a huge hat like an extinguisher, woven of grass or palm-fibres; it is six feet high, and descends to the wearer's shoulders, completely concealing his head and face. From the neck to the knees the man's body is hidden by a crinoline made of the leaves of a certain tree fastened on hoops, one above the other. The Tubuvan is regarded as a female, the Duk-duk as a male. According to one account, women and children may not look upon one of these disguised men or they would die. So strong is this superstition among them that they will run away and hide as soon as they hear him coming, for they are aware of his approach through a peculiar shrieking noise he utters as he goes along. In the district of Berara, where red is the Duk-duk colour, the mere sight of a red cloth is enough to make the women take to their heels. The common herd are not allowed to know who the masker is. If he stumbles and his hat falls to the ground, disclosing his face, or his crinoline is torn to tatters by the bushes, his attendants immediately surround him to hide his person from the vulgar eye. According to one writer, indeed, the performer who drops his mask, or lets it fall so that the sharp point at the top sticks in the ground, is put to death. The institution of the Duk-duk is common to the neighbouring islands of New Ireland and the Duke of York.¹

Among the Galelareese and Tobelorese of Halmahera, an island to the west of New Guinea, boys go through a form of initiation, part of which seems to consist in a pretence of begetting them anew. When a number of boys have reached

¹ R. Parkinson, *In Bismarck Archipel*, pp. 129-134; Rev. G. Brown, "Notes on the Duke of York Group, New Britain, and New Ireland," *Journ. Royal Geogr. Soc.* xlvii. (1878), p. 148 sq.; H. H. Romilly, "The Islands of the New Britain Group," *Proceed. Royal Geogr. Soc.* N.S., ix. (1887), p. 11 sq.; Rev. G. Brown, *ibid.* p. 17; W. Powell, *Wanderings in a Wild Country*, pp. 60-66; C. Hager, *Kaiser Wilhelm's Land und der Bismarck Archipel*, pp. 115-128; Hubner, quoted by W. H. Dall, "On

masks, labrets, and certain aboriginal customs," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), p. 100. The inhabitants of these islands are divided into two exogamous classes, which in the Duke of York Island have two insects for their totems. One of the insects is the *mantis religiosa*; the other is an insect that mimics the leaf of the horse-chestnut tree very closely (Rev. B. Danks, "Marriage customs of the New Britain Group," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xviii. (1889), p. 281 sq.).

the proper age, their parents agree to celebrate the ceremony at their common expense, and they invite others to be present at it. A shed is erected, and two long tables are placed in it, with benches to match, one for the men and one for the women. When all the preparations have been made for a feast, a great many skins of the rayfish, and some pieces of a wood which imparts a red colour to water, are taken to the shed. A priest or elder causes a vessel to be placed in the sight of all the people, and then begins, with significant gestures, to rub a piece of the wood with the ray-skin. The powder so produced is put in the vessel, and at the same time the name of one of the boys is called out. The same proceeding is repeated for each boy. Then the vessels are filled with water, after which the feast begins. At the third cock-crow the priest smears the faces and bodies of the boys with the red water, which represents the blood shed at the perforation of the *hymen*. Towards daybreak the boys are taken to the wood, and must hide behind the largest trees. The men, armed with sword and shield, accompany them, dancing and singing. The priest knocks thrice on each of the trees behind which a boy is hiding. All day the boys stay in the wood, exposing themselves to the heat of the sun as much as possible. In the evening they bathe and return to the shed, where the women supply them with food.¹

In the west of Ceram boys at puberty are admitted to the Kakian association.² Modern writers have commonly

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, "Galela und Tobeloresen," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xvii. (1885), p. 81 sq.

² The Kakian association and its initiatory ceremonies have often been described. See Valentyn, *Ond en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, iii. 3 sq.; Von Schmid, "Het Kakihanssch Verbond op het eiland Ceram," *Tijdschrift v. Nederlands Indië*, 1843, dl. ii. pp. 25-38; Van Ekris, "Het Ceramsche Kakian-verbond," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederland. Zendinggenootschap*, ix. (1865), pp. 205-226 (repeated with slight changes in *Tijdschrift v. Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xvi. (1866), pp. 290-315); F. Fournaier, "De Zuidkust van Ceram," *Tijdschrift*

v. Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde, xvi. 154 sqq.; Van Rees, *Die Plantiers der Beschaving in Nederlands Indië*, pp. 92-106; Van Hoëvell, *Ambon en meer bepaaldelijk de Oeliasers*, p. 153 sqq.; Schulze, "Ueber Ceram und seine Bewohner," *Verhandl. d. Berliner Gesell. f. Anthropologie*, etc. (1877), p. 117; W. Joest, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Eingebornen der Insel Formosa und Ceram," *ibid.* (1882), p. 64; Rosenberg, *Der Malayische Archipel*, p. 318; Bastian, *Indonesien*, i. 145-148; Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, pp. 107-111. The best accounts are those of Valentyn, Von Schmid, Van Ekris, Van Rees, and Riedel, which are accordingly followed in the text.

regarded this association as primarily a political league instituted to resist foreign domination. In reality its objects are purely religious and social, though it is possible that the priests may have occasionally used their powerful influence for political ends. The society is in fact merely one of those widely-diffused primitive institutions, of which a chief object is the initiation of young men. In recent years the true nature of the association has been duly recognised by the distinguished Dutch ethnologist, J. G. F. Riedel. The Kakian house is an oblong wooden shed, situated under the darkest trees in the depth of the forest, and is built to admit so little light that it is impossible to see what goes on in it. Every village has such a house. Thither the boys who are to be initiated are conducted blindfolded, followed by their parents and relations. Each boy is led by the hand by two men, who act as his sponsors or guardians, looking after him during the period of initiation. When all are assembled before the shed, the high priest calls aloud upon the devils. Immediately a hideous uproar is heard to proceed from the shed. It is made by men with bamboo trumpets, who have been secretly introduced into the building by a back door, but the women and children think it is made by the devils, and are much terrified. Then the priests enter the shed, followed by the boys, one at a time. As soon as each boy has disappeared within the precincts, a dull chopping sound is heard, a fearful cry rings out, and a sword or spear, dripping with blood, is thrust through the roof of the shed. This is a token that the boy's head has been cut off, and that the devil has carried him away to the other world, there to regenerate and transform him. So at sight of the bloody sword the mothers weep and wail, crying that the devil has murdered their children. In some places, it would seem, the boys are pushed through an opening made in the shape of a crocodile's jaws or a cassowary's beak, and it is then said that the devil has swallowed them. The boys remain in the shed for five or nine days. Sitting in the dark, they hear the blast of the bamboo trumpets, and from time to time the sound of musket shots and the clash of swords. Every day they bathe, and their faces and bodies are smeared with a yellow dye, to give them the appearance of having been swallowed by the devil.

During his stay in the Kakian house each boy has one or two crosses tattooed with thorns on his breast or arm. When they are not sleeping, the lads must sit in a crouching posture without moving a muscle. As they sit in a row cross-legged, with their hands stretched out, the chief takes his trumpet, and placing the mouth of it on the hands of each lad, speaks through it in strange tones, imitating the voice of the spirits. He warns the lads, under pain of death, to observe the rules of the Kakian society, and never to reveal what has passed in the Kakian house. The novices are also told by the priests to behave well to their blood relations, and are taught the traditions and secrets of the tribe.

Meantime the mothers and sisters of the lads have gone home to weep and mourn. But in a day or two the men who acted as guardians or sponsors to the novices return to the village with the glad tidings that the devil, at the intercession of the priests, has restored the lads to life. The men who bring this news come in a fainting state and daubed with mud, like messengers freshly arrived from the nether world. Before leaving the Kakian house, each lad receives from the priest a stick adorned at both ends with cock's or cassowary's feathers. The sticks are supposed to have been given to the lads by the devil at the time when he restored them to life, and they serve as a token that the youths have been in the spirit-land. When they return to their homes they totter in their walk, and enter the house backward, as if they had forgotten how to walk properly; or they enter the house by the back door. If a plate of food is given to them, they hold it upside down. They remain dumb, indicating their wants by signs only. All this is to show that they are still under the influence of the devil or the spirits. Their sponsors have to teach them all the common acts of life, as if they were new-born children. Further, upon leaving the Kakian house the boys are strictly forbidden to eat of certain fruits until the next celebration of the rites has taken place. And for twenty or thirty days their hair may not be combed by their mothers or sisters. At the end of that time the high priest takes them to a lonely place in the forest, and cuts off a lock of hair from the

crown of each of their heads. After these initiatory rites the lads are deemed men, and may marry; it would be a scandal if they married before.

The simulation of death and resurrection or of a new birth at initiation appears to have lingered on, or at least to have left traces of itself, among peoples who have advanced far beyond the stage of savagery. Thus, after his investiture with the sacred thread—the symbol of his order—a Brahman is called "twice born." *Manu* says, "According to the injunction of the revealed texts the first birth of an Aryan is from his natural mother, the second happens on the tying of the girdle of *Muṅga* grass, and the third on the initiation to the performance of a *Srauta* sacrifice."¹ A pretence of killing the candidate perhaps formed part of the initiation to the Mithraic mysteries.²

Thus, if I am right, wherever totemism is found, and wherever a pretence is made of killing and bringing to life again at initiation, there must exist or have existed not only a belief in the possibility of permanently depositing the soul in some external object—animal, plant, or what not—but an actual intention of so doing. If the question is put, why do men desire to deposit their life outside their bodies? the answer can only be that, like the giant in the fairy tale, they think it safer to do so than to carry it about with them, just as people deposit their money with a banker rather than carry it on their persons. We have seen that at critical periods the life or soul is sometimes temporarily deposited in a safe place till the danger is past. But institutions like totemism are not resorted to merely on special occasions of danger; they are systems into which every one, or at least every male, is obliged to be initiated at a certain period of life. Now the period of life at which initiation takes place is regularly puberty; and this fact suggests that the special danger which totemism and systems like it are

¹ *Laws of Manu*, ii. 169, trans. by Bühler; Dubois, *Mœurs, Institutions et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde*, i. 125; Monier Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India*, pp. 360 sq., 366 sq.; H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 466 sqq.

² Lampridius, *Commodus*, 9; C. W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*,³ pp. 127, 129. Compare Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, i. (Brussels, 1899), pp. 69 sq., 321 sq.

intended to obviate is supposed not to arise till sexual maturity has been attained, in fact, that the danger apprehended is believed to attend the relation of the sexes to each other. It would be easy to prove by a long array of facts that the sexual relation is associated in the primitive mind with many serious perils; but the exact nature of the danger apprehended is still obscure. We may hope that a more exact acquaintance with savage modes of thought will in time disclose this central mystery of primitive society, and will thereby furnish the clue, not only to totemism, but to the origin of the marriage system.

§ 5. Conclusion

Thus the view that Balder's life was in the mistletoe is entirely in harmony with primitive modes of thought. It may indeed sound like a contradiction that, if his life was in the mistletoe, he should nevertheless have been killed by a blow from it. But when a person's life is conceived as embodied in a particular object, with the existence of which his own existence is inseparably bound up, and the destruction of which involves his own, the object in question may be regarded and spoken of indifferently as the person's life or as his death, as happens in the fairy tales. Hence if a man's death is in an object, it is perfectly natural that he should be killed by a blow from it. In the fairy tales Koshchei the Deathless is killed by a blow from the egg or the stone in which his life or death is;¹ the ogres burst when a certain grain of sand—doubtless containing their life or death—is carried over their heads;² the magician dies when the stone in which his life or death is contained is put under his pillow;³ and the Tartar hero is warned that he may be killed by the golden arrow or golden sword in which his soul has been stowed away.⁴

¹ Above, p. 363; compare pp. 362, 369, 374, 375.

² Above, p. 368. ³ Above, p. 361.

⁴ Above, p. 386. In the myth the throwing of the weapons and of the mistletoe at Balder and the blindness of Hödur who slew him remind us of the custom of the Irish reapers who kill the corn-spirit in the last sheaf by throwing

their sickles blindfold at it. See above, vol. ii. p. 179. In Mecklenburg a cock is sometimes buried in the ground and a man who is blindfolded strikes at it with a flail. If he misses it, another tries, and so on till the cock is killed (Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. 280). In England on Shrove Tuesday a hen

The idea that the life of the oak was in the mistletoe was probably suggested, as I have said, by the observation that in winter the mistletoe growing on the oak remains green while the oak itself is leafless. But the position of the plant—growing not from the ground but from the trunk or branches of the tree—might confirm this idea. Primitive man might think that, like himself, the oak-spirit had sought to deposit his life in some safe place, and for this purpose had pitched on the mistletoe, which, being in a sense neither on earth nor in heaven, was as secure a place as could be found. At the beginning of this chapter we saw that primitive man seeks to preserve the life of his human divinities by keeping them in a sort of intermediate position between earth and heaven, as the place where they are least likely to be assailed by the dangers that encompass the life of man on earth. We can therefore understand why it has been a rule both of ancient and of modern folk-medicine that the mistletoe should not be allowed to touch the ground; were it to touch the ground, its healing virtue would be gone.¹ This may be a survival of the old superstition that the plant in which the life of the sacred tree was concentrated should not be exposed to the risk incurred by contact with the earth. In an Indian legend, which offers a parallel to the Balder myth, Indra promised the demon Namuci not to kill him by day or by night, nor with what was wet or what was dry. But he killed him in the morning twilight by sprinkling over him the foam of the sea.² The foam of the sea is just such an object as a savage might choose to put his life in, because it occupies that sort of intermediate or nondescript

used to be tied upon a man's back, and other men blindfolded struck at it with branches till they killed it (Dyer, *British Popular Customs*, p. 68). Mannhard (*Die Körudmomen*, p. 16 *sq.*) has made it probable that such sports are directly derived from the custom of killing a cock upon the harvest-field as a representative of the corn-spirit (see above, vol. ii. p. 268 *sq.*). These customs, therefore, combined with the blindness of Hödur in the myth, suggest that the man who killed the human representative of the oak-spirit

was blindfolded, and threw his weapon or the mistletoe from a little distance. After the Lapps had killed a bear—which was the occasion of many superstitious ceremonies—the bear's skin was hung on a post, and the women, blindfolded, shot arrows at it (Scheffer, *Lapponia*, p. 240).

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxiv. 12; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ ii. 1010. Compare below, p. 467.

² Denham Rouse, in *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889), p. 61, quoting *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*, I. vii. 1.

position between earth and sky or sea and sky in which primitive man sees safety. It is therefore not surprising that the foam of the river should be the totem of a clan in India.¹ Again, the view that the mistletoe owes its mystic character partly to its not growing on the ground is confirmed by a parallel superstition about the mountain-ash or rowan-tree. In Jutland a rowan that is found growing out of the top of another tree is esteemed "exceedingly effective against witchcraft: since it does not grow on the ground witches have no power over it; if it is to have its full effect it must be cut on Ascension Day."² Hence it is placed over doors to prevent the ingress of witches.³ Similarly the mistletoe in Germany is still universally considered a protection against witchcraft, and in Sweden, as we saw, the mistletoe which is gathered on Midsummer Eve is attached to the ceiling of the house, the horse stall, or the cow's crib, in the belief that this renders the Troll powerless to injure man or beast.⁴

The view that the mistletoe was not merely the instrument of Balder's death, but that it contained his life, is countenanced by the analogy of a Scottish superstition. Tradition ran that the fate of the family of Hay was bound up with the mistletoe of a certain oak.

"While the mistletoe bats on Errol's oak,
And that oak stands fast,
The Hays shall flourish, and their good gray hawk
Shall not flinch before the blast.

But when the root of the oak decays,
And the mistletoe dwines on its withered breast,
The grass shall grow on the Earl's hearthstone,
And the corbies crawl in the falcon's nest."

¹ Col. E. T. Dalton, "The Kols of Chota-Nagpore," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society*, N.S., vi. (1868), p. 36.

² Jens Kamp, *Danske Folkeminder* (Odense, 1877), pp. 172, 65 sq., referred to in Feilberg's *Bidrag til en Ordbog over Jyske Almuesnål*, Fjerde hefte (Copenhagen, 1888), p. 320. For a sight of Feilberg's work I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Walter

Gregor, M.A., Pilsigo, who pointed out the passage to me.

³ E. T. Kristensen, *Jyske Folkeminder*, vi. 380₂₀₂, referred to by Feilberg, *l.c.* According to Marcellus (*De Medicamentis*, xxvi. 115), ivy which springs from an oak is a remedy for stone, provided it be cut with a copper instrument.

⁴ Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² p. 97, § 128; L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 269.

"A large oak with the mistletoe growing on it was long pointed out as the tree referred to. A piece of the mistletoe cut by a Hay was believed to have magical virtues. 'The oak is gone and the estate is lost to the family,' as a local historian says."¹ The idea that the fate of a family, as distinct from the lives of its members, is bound up with a particular plant or tree, is no doubt comparatively modern. The older view probably was that the lives of all the Hays were in this particular mistletoe, just as in the Indian story the lives of all the ogres are in a lemon; to break a twig of the mistletoe would then have been to kill one of the Hays. Similarly in the island of Rum, whose bold mountains the voyager from Oban to Skye observes to seaward, it was thought that if one of the family of Lachlin shot a deer on the mountain of Finchra, he would die suddenly or contract a distemper which would soon prove fatal.² Probably the life of the Lachlins was bound up with the deer on Finchra, as the life of the Hays was bound up with the mistletoe on Errol's oak, and the life of the Dalhousie family with the Edgewell Tree.

It is not a new opinion that the Golden Bough was the mistletoe.³ True, Virgil does not identify but only compares it with mistletoe. But this may be only a poetical device to cast a mystic glamour over the humble plant. Or, more probably, his description was based on a popular superstition that at certain times the mistletoe blazed out into a supernatural golden glory. The poet tells how two doves, guiding Aeneas to the gloomy vale in whose depth grew the Golden Bough, alighted upon a tree, "whence shone a flickering gleam of gold. As in the woods in winter cold the mistletoe—a plant not native to its tree—is green with fresh leaves and twines its yellow berries about the boles; such seemed upon the shady oak the leafy gold, so rustled in the gentle breeze the golden leaf."⁴ Here Virgil

¹ Extract from a newspaper, copied and sent to me by the Rev. Walter Gregor, M.A., Pitsligo. Mr. Gregor does not mention the name of the newspaper.

² Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in

Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, lii. 661.

³ Rochholz, *Deutscher Glaube und Brauch*, i. 9.

⁴ Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 203 sqq., cp. 136 sqq. On the mistletoe (*viscum*) see Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xvi. 245 sqq.

definitely describes the Golden Bough as growing on an oak, and compares it with the mistletoe. The inference is almost inevitable that the Golden Bough was nothing but the mistletoe seen through the haze of poetry or of popular superstition.

Now grounds have been shown for believing that the priest of the Arician grove—the King of the Wood—personified the tree on which grew the Golden Bough.¹ Hence if that tree was 'the oak, the King of the Wood must have been a personification of the oak-spirit. It is, therefore, easy to understand why, before he could be slain, it was necessary to break the Golden Bough. As an oak-spirit, his life or death was in the mistletoe on the oak, and so long as the mistletoe remained intact, he, like Balder, could not die. To slay him, therefore, it was necessary to break the mistletoe, and probably, as in the case of Balder, to throw it at him. And to complete the parallel, it is only necessary to suppose that the King of the Wood was formerly burned, dead or alive, at the midsummer fire festival which, as we have seen, was annually celebrated in the Arician grove.² The perpetual fire which burned in the grove, like the perpetual fire under the oak at Romove, was probably fed with the sacred oak-wood; and thus it would be in a great fire of oak that the King of the Wood formerly met his end. At a later time, as I have suggested, his annual tenure of office was lengthened or shortened, as the case might be, by the rule which allowed him to live so long as he could prove his divine right by the strong hand. But he only escaped the fire to fall by the sword.

Thus it seems that at a remote age in the heart of Italy, beside the sweet Lake of Nemi, the same fiery tragedy was annually enacted which Italian merchants and soldiers were afterwards to witness among their rude kindred, the Celts of Gaul, and which, if the Roman eagles had ever swooped on Norway, might have been found repeated with little difference among the barbarous Aryans of the North. The rite

¹ Virgil (*Aen.* vi. 201 *sqq.*) places the Golden Bough in the neighbourhood of Lake Avernus. But this was probably a poetical liberty, adopted for the convenience of Aeneas's descent

to the infernal world. Italian tradition, as we learn from Servius, placed the Golden Bough in the grove at Nemi.

² See above, vol. i. p. 5.

was probably an essential feature in the ancient Aryan worship of the oak.¹

It only remains to ask, Why was the mistletoe called the Golden Bough? The name was not simply a poet's fancy, nor even peculiarly Italian; for in Welsh also the mistletoe is known as "the tree of pure gold."² The whitish-yellow of the mistletoe berries is hardly enough to account for the name. For Virgil says that the Bough was altogether golden, stem as well as leaves,³ and the same is implied in the Welsh name, "the tree of pure gold." A clue to the real meaning of the name is furnished by the mythical fern-seed or fern-bloom.

We saw that fern-seed is popularly supposed to bloom like gold or fire on Midsummer Eve. Thus in Bohemia it is said that "on St. John's Day fern-seed blooms with golden blossoms that gleam like fire."⁴ Now it is a property of this mythical fern-seed that whoever has it, or will ascend a mountain holding it in his hand on Midsummer Eve, will discover a vein of gold or will see the treasures of the earth shining with a bluish flame.⁵ In Russia they say that if you succeed in catching the wondrous bloom of the fern at midnight on Midsummer Eve, you have only to throw it up into the air, and it will fall like a star on the very spot where a treasure lies hidden.⁶ In Brittany treasure-seekers gather fern-seed at midnight on Midsummer Eve, and keep it till Palm Sunday of the following year; then they strew the seed on

¹ A custom of annually burning a human representative of the corn-spirit has been noted among the Egyptians, Pawnees, and Khonds. See above, vol. ii. pp. 238 sq., 244, 254 sq. We have seen (above, p. 167 sqq.) that in Western Asia there are strong traces of a practice of annually burning a human god. The Druids appear to have eaten portions of the human victim (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxx. 13). Perhaps portions of the flesh of the King of the Wood were eaten by his worshippers as a sacrament. We have found traces of the use of sacramental bread at Nemi. See above, vol. ii. p. 343 sq.

² Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,¹ ii. 1009, *fern puraur*.

³ Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 137 sq.

⁴ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 97, § 673.

⁵ Grohmann, *op. cit.* p. 97, § 676; Wulke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² p. 94, § 123; Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,² p. 158, § 1350.

⁶ C. Rosswurm, "Aberglaube in Russland," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iv. (1859), p. 152 sq.; Gubernatis, *Mythologie des Plantes*, ii. 146.

ground where they think a treasure is concealed.¹ Tyrolese peasants imagine that hidden treasures can be seen glowing like flame on Midsummer Eve, and that fern-seed, gathered at this mystic season, with the usual precautions, will help to bring the buried gold to the surface.² In the Swiss canton of Freiburg people used to watch beside a fern on St. John's night in the hope of winning a treasure, which the devil himself sometimes brought to them.³ In Bohemia they say that he who procures the golden bloom of the fern at this season has thereby the key to all hidden treasures; and that if maidens will spread a cloth under the fast-fading bloom, red gold will drop into it.⁴ And in the Tyrol and Bohemia if you place fern-seed among money, the money will never decrease, however much of it you spend.⁵ Sometimes the fern-seed is supposed to bloom on Christmas night, and whoever catches it will become very rich.⁶ In Swabia you can, by taking the proper precautions, compel the devil himself to bring you a packet of fern-seed on Christmas night. But for four weeks previously, and during the whole of the Advent season, you must be very careful never to pray, never to go to church, and never to use holy water; you must busy yourself all day long with devilish

¹ P. Sébillot, *Traditions et Superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne*, ii. 336; *id.*, *Contes populaires de la Haute-Bretagne*, p. 217.

² J. E. Waldfreund, "Volksgebräuche und Aberglauben in Tirol und dem Salzburger Gebirg," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iii. (1855), p. 339.

³ H. Runge, "Volks Glaube in der Schweiz," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iv. (1859), p. 175.

⁴ Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Fest-Kalendar aus Böhmen*, p. 311 sq. Compare Varnaleken, *Mythen und Bräuche des Volkes in Oesterreich*, p. 309 sq.; Töppen, *Aberglauben aus Masuren*,² p. 72 sq. Even without the use of fern-seed treasures are sometimes said to bloom or burn in the earth on Midsummer Eve; in Transylvania only children born on a Sunday can see them and fetch them up. See Hall-

rich, *Zur Volkskunde der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, p. 287; Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,² p. 159, §§ 1351, 1352; K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*, ii. 285, § 1431; E. Monseur, *Folklore Wallon*, p. 6, § 1789.

⁵ Zingerle, *op. cit.* p. 103, § 882; *id.*, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853), p. 330; W. Müller, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren*, p. 265. At Pergine, in the Tyrol, it was thought that fern-seed gathered with the dew on St. John's night had the power of transforming metals (into gold?). See Ch. Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, p. 237, § 23.

⁶ Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,² p. 190 sq., § 1573.

thoughts, and cherish an ardent wish that the devil would help you to get money. Thus prepared you take your stand, between eleven and twelve on Christmas night, at the meeting of two roads, over both of which corpses have been carried to the churchyard. Here many people meet you, some of them dead and buried long ago, it may be your parents or grandparents, or old friends and acquaintances, and they stop and greet you, and ask, "What are you doing here?" And tiny little goblins hop and dance about and try to make you laugh. But if you smile or utter a single word, the devil will tear you to shreds and tatters on the spot. If, however, you stand glum and silent and solemn, there will come, after all the ghostly train has passed by, a man dressed as a hunter, and that is the devil. He will hand you a paper cornet full of fern-seed, which you must keep and carry about with you as long as you live. It will give you the power of doing as much work at your trade in a day as twenty or thirty ordinary men could do in the same time. So you will grow very rich. But few people have the courage to go through with the ordeal.¹ In Styria they say that by gathering fern-seed on Christmas night you can force the devil to bring you a bag of money.²

Thus, on the principle of like by like, fern-seed is supposed to discover gold because it is itself golden; and for a similar reason it enriches its possessor with an un-failing supply of gold. But while the fern-seed is described as golden, it is equally described as glowing and fiery.³ Hence, when we consider that two great days for gathering the fabulous seed are Midsummer Eve and Christmas—that is, the two solstices (for Christmas is nothing but an old heathen celebration of the winter solstice)—we are led to regard the fiery aspect of the fern-seed as primary, and its golden aspect as secondary and derivative. Fern-seed, in

¹ E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 242 sq., § 267.

² A. Schlossar, "Volksmeinung und Volksaberglaube aus der deutschen Steiermark," *Germania*, N.R., xxiv. (1891), p. 387.

³ Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 97, § 675; Kalsion, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 98; C. Russwurm, "Aberglaube in Russland," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iv. (1859), p. 152.

fact, would seem to be an emanation of the sun's fire at the two turning-points of its course, the summer and winter solstices. This view is confirmed by a German story in which a hunter is said to have procured fern-seed by shooting at the sun on Midsummer Day at noon; three drops of blood fell down, which he caught in a white cloth, and these blood-drops were the fern-seed.¹ Here the blood is clearly the blood of the sun, from which the fern-seed is thus directly derived. Thus it may be taken as certain that fern-seed is golden, because it is believed to be an emanation of the sun's golden fire.

Now, like fern-seed, the mistletoe is gathered either at Midsummer or Christmas²—that is, at the summer and winter solstices—and, like fern-seed, it is supposed to possess the power of revealing treasures in the earth. On Midsummer Eve people in Sweden make divining-rods of mistletoe, or of four different kinds of wood one of which must be mistletoe. The treasure-seeker places the rod on the ground after sun-down, and when it rests directly over treasure, the rod begins to move as if it were alive.³ Now, if the mistletoe discovers gold, it must be in its character of the Golden Bough; and if it is gathered at the solstices, must not the Golden Bough, like the golden fern-seed, be an emanation of the sun's fire? The question cannot be answered with a simple affirmative. We have seen that the old Aryans probably kindled the midsummer bonfires as sun-charms, that is, with the intention of supplying the

¹ L. Bechstein, *Deutsches Sagenbuch* (Leipzig, 1853), p. 430, No. 500: *id.*, *Thüringer Sagenbuch* (Leipzig, 1885), ii. p. 17 sq., No. 161.

² For gathering it at midsummer, see above, pp. 343, 344. The custom of gathering it at Christmas still survives among ourselves. At York "on the eve of Christmas Day they carry mistletoe to the high altar of the cathedral, and proclaim a public and universal liberty, pardon, and freedom to all sorts of inferior and even wicked people at the gates of the city, towards the four quarters of heaven" (Stukeley, *Medallie History of Carausius*, quoted by Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, i. 525). This last custom, which is now doubt-

less obsolete, may have been a relic of an annual period of license like the Saturnalia. The traditional privilege associated with the mistletoe is probably another relic of the same sort.

³ Afzelius, *Volkssagen und Volkslieder aus Schwedens älterer und neuerer Zeit*, i. 41 sq.; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ iii. 289; L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 266 sq. In the Tyrol they say that if mistletoe grows on a hazel-tree, there must be a treasure under the tree (Von Alpenburg, *Mythen und Sagen Tirols*, p. 398). We have seen that the divining-rod which reveals treasures is commonly cut from a hazel (above, p. 342).

sun with fresh fire. But as this fire was always elicited by the friction of oak-wood,¹ it must have appeared to the ancient Aryan that the sun was periodically recruited from the fire which resided in the sacred oak. In other words, the oak must have seemed to him the original storehouse or reservoir of the fire which was from time to time drawn out to feed the sun. But the life of the oak was conceived to be in the mistletoe; therefore the mistletoe must have contained the seed or germ of the fire which was elicited by friction from the wood of the oak. Thus, instead of saying that the mistletoe was an emanation of the sun's fire, it would be more correct to say that the sun's fire was regarded as an emanation of the mistletoe. No wonder, then, that the mistletoe shone with a golden splendour, and was called the Golden Bough. Probably, however, like fern-seed, it was thought to assume its golden aspect only at those stated times, especially midsummer, when fire was drawn from the oak to light up the sun.² At Pulverhatch, in Shropshire, it was believed within living memory that the oak-tree blooms on Midsummer Eve and the blossom withers before daylight.³ This fleeting bloom of the oak, if I am right, could originally have been nothing but the mistletoe in its character of the Golden Bough. As Shropshire borders on Wales, the superstition may be Welsh in its immediate origin, though probably the belief is a fragment of the primitive Aryan creed. In some parts of Italy, as we saw,⁴ peasants still go out on Midsummer morning to search the oak-trees for the "oil of St. John," which, like the mistletoe, heals all wounds, and is, perhaps, the mistletoe itself in its glorified aspect. Thus it is easy to understand how a title like the Golden Bough or the "tree of pure gold," so little descriptive of the real appearance of the plant, should have held its ground as a name for the mistletoe in Italy and Wales, and probably in other parts of the Aryan world.⁵

¹ Above, p. 348.

² Fern-seed is supposed to bloom at Easter as well as at midsummer and Christmas (Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 98 sq.); and Easter, as we have seen, is one of the times when sun-fires are kindled.

³ Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 242.

⁴ P. 343.

⁵ The reason why Virgil represents Æneas as taking the mistletoe with him to Hades is perhaps that the mistletoe was supposed to repel evil spirits

Now, too, we can fully understand why Virbius came to be confounded with the sun. If Virbius was, as I have tried to show, a tree-spirit, he must have been the spirit of the oak on which grew the Golden Bough; for tradition represented him as the first of the Kings of the Wood. As an oak-spirit he must have been supposed periodically to rekindle the sun's fire, and might therefore easily be confounded with the sun itself. Similarly we can explain why Balder, an oak-spirit, was described as "so fair of face and so shining that a light went forth from him,"¹ and why he should have been so often taken to be the sun. And in general we may say that in primitive society, when the only known way of making fire is by the friction of wood, the savage must necessarily conceive fire as a property stored away, like sap or juice, in trees, from which he has laboriously to extract it. The Senel Indians of California "profess to believe that the whole world was once a globe of fire, whence that element passed up into the trees, and now comes out whenever two pieces of wood are rubbed together."² In the Vedic hymns the fire-god Agni "is spoken of as born in wood, as the embryo of plants, or as distributed in plants. He is also said to have entered into all plants or to strive after them. When he is called the embryo of trees, or of trees as well as plants, there may be a side-glance at the fire produced in forests by the friction of the boughs of trees."³ In some Australian languages the words for wood and fire are the same.⁴ Thus all trees, or at least the particular sorts of trees whose wood he employs in fire-making, must be regarded by the savage as reservoirs of hidden fire, and it is natural that he should describe them by epithets like golden, shining, or bright. May not this have been the

(see above, pp. 344, 448). Hence when Charon is disposed to bluster at Aeneas, the sight of the Golden Bough quiets him (*Aen.* vi. 406 sq.). Perhaps also the power ascribed to the mistletoe of laying bare the secrets of the earth may have suggested its use as a kind of "open Sesame" to the lower world. Compare *Aen.* vi. 140 sq.—

"*Sed non ante datur telluris aperta
subire,*

*Auricomos quam qui decerpserit arbore
fetus."*

¹ *Die Edda*, übersetzt von K. Simrock,⁵ p. 264.

² S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 171.

³ A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 91 sq.; cp. H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 120.

⁴ E. M. Curr, *The Australian Race*, i. 9, 18.

origin of the name, "the Bright or Shining One" (Zeus, Jove), by which the ancient Greeks and Italians designated their supreme god?¹ It is at least highly significant that, amongst both Greeks and Italians, the oak should have been the tree of the supreme god, that at his most ancient shrines, both in Greece and Italy, this supreme god should have been actually represented by an oak, and that so soon as the barbarous Aryans of Northern Europe appear in the light of history, they should be found, amid all diversities of language, of character, and of country, nevertheless at one in worshipping the oak and extracting their sacred fire from its wood. If we are to judge of the primitive religion of the European Aryans by comparing the religions of the different branches of the stock, the highest place in their pantheon must certainly be assigned to the oak. The result, then, of our inquiry is to make it probable that, down to the time of the Roman Empire and the beginning of our era, the primitive worship of the Aryans was maintained nearly in its original form in the sacred grove at Nemi, as in the oak woods of Gaul, of Prussia, and of Scandinavia; and that the King of the Wood lived and died as an incarnation of the supreme Aryan god, whose life was in the mistletoe or Golden Bough.

¹ On the derivation of the names Zeus and Jove from a root meaning "shining," "bright," see G. Curtius, *Griech. Etymologie*,⁵ p. 236; Vaníček, *Griech.-Latein. Etymolog. Wörterbuch*, p. 353 *sqq.* On the relation of Jove to the oak, compare Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xii. 3: "*arborum genera numinibus*

suis dicata perpetuo servantur, ut Jovi aesculus"; Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 332: "*omnis quercus Jovi est consecrata*." Zeus and Jupiter have commonly been regarded as sky gods, because their names are etymologically connected with the Sanscrit word for sky. The reason seems insufficient.

We are at the end of our inquiry, but as often happens in the search after truth, if we have answered one question, we have raised many more ; if we have followed one track home, we have had to pass by others that opened off it and led, or seemed to lead, to far other goals than the sacred grove at Nemi. Some of these paths we have followed a little way ; others, if fortune should be kind, the writer and the reader may one day pursue together. For the present we have journeyed far enough together, and it is time to part. Yet before we do so, we may well ask ourselves whether there is not some more general conclusion, some lesson, if possible, of hope and encouragement, to be drawn from the melancholy record of human error and folly which has engaged our attention in these volumes.

If then we consider, on the one hand, the essential similarity of man's chief wants everywhere and at all times, and on the other hand, the wide difference between the means he has adopted to satisfy them in different ages, we shall perhaps be disposed to conclude that the movement of the higher thought, so far as we can trace it, has on the whole been from magic through religion to science. In magic man depends on his own strength to meet the difficulties and dangers that beset him on every side. He believes in a certain established order of nature on which he can surely count, and which he can manipulate for his own ends. When he discovers his mistake ; when he recognises sadly that both the order of nature which he had assumed and the control which he had believed himself to exercise over it were purely imaginary, he ceases to rely on his own intelligence and his own unaided efforts, and throws himself humbly on the mercy of certain great invisible beings behind the veil of nature, to whom he now ascribes all those far-reaching powers which he once arrogated to himself. Thus in the acuter minds magic is gradually superseded by religion, which explains the succession of natural phenomena as regulated by the will, the passion, or the caprice of spiritual beings like man in kind, though vastly superior to him in power.

But as time goes on this explanation in its turn

proves to be unsatisfactory. For it assumes that the succession of natural events is not determined by immutable laws, but is to some extent variable and irregular, and this assumption is not borne out by closer observation. On the contrary, the more we scrutinise that succession the more we are struck by the rigid uniformity, the punctual precision with which, wherever we can follow them, the operations of nature are carried on. Every great advance in knowledge has extended the sphere of order and correspondingly restricted the sphere of apparent disorder in the world, till now we are ready to anticipate that even in regions where chance and confusion appear still to reign, a fuller knowledge would everywhere reduce the seeming chaos to cosmos. Thus the keener minds, still pressing forward to a deeper solution of the mysteries of the universe, come to reject the religious theory of nature as inadequate, and to revert in a measure to the older standpoint of magic by postulating explicitly, what in magic had only been implicitly assumed, to wit, an inflexible regularity in the order of natural events, which, if carefully observed, enables us to foresee their course with certainty and to act accordingly. In short, religion, regarded as an explanation of nature, is displaced by science.

But while science has this much in common with magic that both rest on a faith in order as the underlying principle of all things, readers of this work will hardly need to be reminded that the order presupposed by magic differs widely from that which forms the basis of science. The difference flows naturally from the different modes in which the two orders have been reached. For whereas the order on which magic reckons is merely an extension, by false analogy, of the order in which ideas present themselves to our minds, the order laid down by science is derived from patient and exact observation of the phenomena themselves. The abundance, the solidity, and the splendour of the results already achieved by science are well fitted to inspire us with a cheerful confidence in the soundness of its method. Here at last, after groping about in the dark for countless ages, man has hit upon a clue to the labyrinth, a golden key that opens many locks in the

treasury of nature. It is probably not too much to say that the hope of progress—moral and intellectual as well as material—in the future is bound up with the fortunes of science, and that every obstacle placed in the way of scientific discovery is a wrong to humanity.

Yet the history of thought should warn us against concluding that because the scientific theory of the world is the best that has yet been formulated, it is necessarily complete and final. We must remember that at bottom the generalisations of science or, in common parlance, the laws of nature are merely hypotheses devised to explain that ever-shifting phantasmagoria of thought which we dignify with the high-sounding names of the world and the universe. In the last analysis magic, religion, and science are nothing but theories of thought; and as science has supplanted its predecessors, so it may hereafter be itself superseded by some more perfect hypothesis, perhaps by some totally different way of looking at the phenomena—of registering the shadows on the screen—of which we in this generation can form no idea. The advance of knowledge is an infinite progression towards a goal that for ever recedes. We need not murmur at the endless pursuit:—

*"Fatti non foste a viver come bruti
Ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza."*

Great things will come of that pursuit, though we may not enjoy them. Brighter stars will rise on some voyager of the future—some great Ulysses of the realms of thought—than shine on us. The dreams of magic may one day be the waking realities of science. But a dark shadow lies athwart the far end of this fair prospect. For however vast the increase of knowledge and of power which the future may have in store for man, he can scarcely hope to stay the sweep of those great forces which seem to be making silently but relentlessly for the destruction of all this starry universe in which our earth swims as a speck or mote. In the ages to come man may be able to predict, perhaps even to control, the wayward courses of the winds and clouds, but hardly will his puny hands have strength to speed

afresh our slackening planet in its orbit or rekindle the dying fire of the sun. Yet the philosopher who trembles at the idea of such distant catastrophes may console himself by reflecting that these gloomy apprehensions, like the earth and the sun themselves, are only parts of that unsubstantial world which thought has conjured up out of the void, and that the phantoms which the subtle enchantress has evoked to-day she may ban to-morrow. They too, like so much that to common eyes seems solid, may melt into air, into thin air.

Without dipping so far into the future, we may illustrate the course which thought has hitherto run by likening it to a web woven of three different threads—the black thread of magic, the red thread of religion, and the white thread of science, if under science we may include those simple truths, drawn from observation of nature, of which men in all ages have possessed a store. Could we then survey the web of thought from the beginning, we should probably perceive it to be at first a chequer of black and white, a patchwork of true and false notions, hardly tinged as yet by the red thread of religion. But carry your eye further along the fabric and you will remark that, while the black and white chequer still runs through it, there rests on the middle portion of the web, where religion has entered most deeply into its texture, a dark crimson stain, which shades off insensibly into a lighter tint as the white thread of science is woven more and more into the tissue. To a web thus chequered and stained, thus shot with threads of diverse hues, but gradually changing colour the farther it is unrolled, the state of modern thought, with all its divergent aims and conflicting tendencies, may be compared. Will the great movement which for centuries has been slowly altering the complexion of thought be continued in the near future? or will a reaction set in which may arrest progress and even undo much that has been done? To keep up our parable, what will be the colour of the web which the Fates are now weaving on the humming loom of time? will it be white or red? We cannot tell. A faint glimmering light illumines the backward portion of the web. Clouds and thick darkness hide the other end.

If turning from the unrest of the present and the uncertainties of the future we revisit once more in imagination the scene from which we set out on our long pilgrimage, we shall find the Lake of Nemi but little changed from what it was in the days when Diana saw her fair face reflected in its still waters. The temple of the sylvan goddess indeed has disappeared, and the King of the Wood no longer stands sentinel over the Golden Bough. But Nemi's woods are still green, and at evening, while the sunset fades in the glowing west, you may hear the church-bells of Albano, and perhaps, if the air be still, of Rome itself, ringing the Angelus. Sweet and solemn they chime out from the distant city and die lingeringly away across the wide Campagnan marshes. *Le roi est mort, vive le roi !*



NOTE A

SECLUSION FROM SUN AND EARTH

IN the text I have shown that sacred kings and girls at puberty have sometimes been forbidden to see the sun and to set foot on the ground, and I have attempted to explain these prohibitions by the supposed need of isolating such persons from society and from the world, to which the powerful and dangerous influences with which they are charged might do a serious if not irreparable mischief. These rules, however, do not hold exclusively of the persons mentioned in the text, but are applicable in certain circumstances to other sacred or tabooed persons and things. Whatever, in fact, is permeated by the mysterious virtue of taboo may need to be isolated from earth and heaven. For example; women after childbirth and their offspring are more or less tabooed all the world over; hence in Corea the rays of the sun are rigidly excluded from both mother and child for a period of twenty-one or a hundred days, according to their rank, after the birth has taken place.¹ Among some of the tribes on the north-west coast of New Guinea a woman may not leave the house for months after childbirth. When she does go out, she must cover her head with a hood or mat; for if the sun were to shine upon her, it is thought that one of her male relations would die.² Again, mourners are everywhere taboo; accordingly in mourning the Ainos wear peculiar caps in order that the sun may not shine upon their heads.³ During a solemn fast of three days the Indians of Costa Rica eat no salt, speak as little as possible, light no fires, and stay strictly indoors, or if they go out during the day they carefully cover themselves from the light of the sun, believing that exposure

¹ Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours* (London, 1898), ii. 248.

² J. L. van Hasselt, "Eenige Aanteekeningen aangaande de bewoners der N. Westkust van Nieuw Guinea,"

Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkskunde, xxxi. (1886), p. 587.

³ A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, v. 366.

to the sun's rays would turn them black.¹ On Yule Night it has been customary in parts of Sweden from time immemorial to go on pilgrimage, whereby people learn many secret things and know what is to happen in the coming year. As a preparation for this pilgrimage, "some secrete themselves for three days previously in a dark cellar, so as to be shut out altogether from the light of heaven. Others retire at an early hour of the preceding morning to some out-of-the-way place, such as a hay-loft, where they bury themselves in the hay, that they may neither see nor hear any living creature; and here they remain, in silence and fasting, until after sundown; whilst there are those who think it sufficient if they rigidly abstain from food on the day before commencing their wanderings. During this period of probation a man ought not to see fire, but should this have happened, he must strike a light with flint and steel, whereby the evil that would otherwise have ensued will be obviated."² During the sixteen days that a Pima Indian is undergoing purification for killing an Apache he may not see a blazing fire.³

Again, newly born infants are strongly taboo; accordingly in Loango they are not allowed to touch the earth.⁴ Warriors, also, on the war-path are strictly taboo; hence some Indians may not sit on the bare ground the whole time they are out on a warlike expedition.⁵ In Laos the hunting of elephants gives rise to many taboos; one of them is that the chief hunter may not touch the earth with his foot. Accordingly, when he alights from his elephant, the others spread a carpet of leaves for him to step upon.⁶ German superstition recommended that when witches were led to the block or to the fire, they should not be allowed to touch the bare earth, and a reason suggested for the rule was that if they touched the earth they might make themselves invisible and escape. The sagacious author of "The striped-petticoat Philosophy" ridicules this idea as silly talk; not a single instance, he assures us, can be produced of a witch who escaped in this fashion. "I have myself," says he, "in my youth seen divers witches burned, some at Arnstadt, some at Ilmenau, some at Schwenda, a noble village between Arnstadt and Ilmenau, and some of them were pardoned and beheaded before being burned. They were laid on the earth in the place of execution and

¹ W. M. Gabb, *Indian Tribes and Languages of Costa Rica* (read before the American Philosophical Society, 20th August 1875), p. 510.

² L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 194.

³ Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, i. 553. See above, vol. i. p. 337.

⁴ Pechuel-Loësche, "Indiscretus aus Loango," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, x. (1878), p. 29 sq.

⁵ J. Adair, *History of the American Indians*, p. 382; *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, p. 123.

⁶ E. Aymonier, *Notes sur le Laos*, p. 26.

beheaded like any other poor sinner; whereas if they could have escaped by touching the earth, not one of them would have failed to do so."¹ The most sacred object of the Arunta tribe in Central Australia is a pole about twenty feet high, which is completely smeared with human blood and set up on the ground where the final initiatory ceremonies are performed. A young gum-tree is chosen to form the pole, and it must be cut down and transported in such a way that it does not touch the earth till it is erected in its place on the holy ground.² The holy ark of some North American Indians was deemed "so sacred and dangerous to be touched," that no one, except the war chief and his attendant, would touch it, "under the penalty of incurring great evil. Nor would the most inveterate enemy touch it in the woods for the very same reason." In carrying it against the enemy they never placed it on the ground, but rested it on stones or logs.³ At Sipi, near Simla, in Northern India, an annual fair is held, at which the people dance round a sacred object consisting of a square box with a domed top, which exhibits on three sides the head and shoulders of a female figure, while to the fourth side a black yak's tail is fastened. This sacred object is brought to Sipi from a place sixty miles off; it may not be set down on the ground during the journey, but is carried by relays of men without stopping anywhere on the way.⁴ The sacred clam-shell of the Elk clan is kept in a holy bag, which is never allowed to touch the earth.⁵ In Scotland, when water was carried from sacred wells to sick people, the water-vessel might not touch the ground.⁶ In some parts of Aberdeenshire, the last bit of standing corn (which, as we have seen, is very sacred) is not suffered to touch the ground; but as it is cut, it is placed on the lap of the "guedman."⁷ Sacred food may not, in certain circumstances, be brought into contact with the earth. We have seen that among some Victorian tribes this rule held with regard to the fat of the emu.⁸ The Roumanians of Transylvania believe that "every fresh-baked loaf of wheaten bread is sacred, and should a piece inadvertently fall to the ground, it is hastily picked up, carefully wiped and kissed, and if soiled, thrown into the fire—partly as an offering to the dead, and partly because it were a heavy sin to throw away or tread upon any

¹ *Die gestriegelte Kockenphilosophie* (Chemnitz, 1759), p. 586 sqq.

² Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 364, 629.

³ J. Adair, *History of the American Indians*, p. 162 sq.

⁴ H. Babington Smith, in *Folk-lore*, v. (1894), p. 340.

⁵ E. James, *Expedition from Pittsburg to the Rocky Mountains*, ii. 47:

J. Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), p. 226.

⁶ C. F. Gordon Cumming, *In the Hebrides* (London, 1883), p. 211.

⁷ W. Gregor, "Quelques coutumes du Nord-est du Comté d'Aberdeen," *Revue des Traditions populaires*, lii. (1888), p. 485 B.

⁸ Above, p. 203.

particle of it."¹ At certain festivals in South-Eastern Borneo the food which is consumed in the common house may not touch the ground; hence, a little before the festivals take place, foot-bridges made of thin poles are constructed from the private dwellings to the common house.² When Hall was living with the Esquimaux and grew tired of eating walrus, one of the women brought the head and neck of a reindeer for him to eat. This venison had to be completely wrapt up before it was brought into the house, and once in the house it could only be placed on the platform which served as a bed. "To have placed it on the floor or on the platform behind the fire-lamp, among the walrus, musk-ox, and polar-bear meat which occupy a goodly portion of both of these places, would have horrified the whole town, as, according to the actual belief of the Innuits, not another walrus could be secured this year, and there would ever be trouble in capturing any more."³ But in this last case the real scruple appears to have been felt not so much at placing the venison on the ground as at bringing it into contact with walrus-meat.⁴

Sometimes magical implements and remedies are supposed to lose their virtue by contact with the ground. Thus in the Boulia district of Queensland the magical bone, which the sorcerer points at his victim as a means of killing him, is never by any chance allowed to touch the earth.⁵ Some people in antiquity believed that a woman in hard labour would be delivered if a spear, which had been wrenched from a man's body without touching the ground, were thrown over the roof of the house where the expectant mother lay. According to certain ancient writers, arrows which had been extracted from bodies without coming into contact with the earth and laid under a sleeper's body, acted as a love-charm.⁶ Pliny mentions several medicinal plants which, if they were to retain their healing virtue, ought not to be allowed to touch the earth.⁷ The curious medical treatise of Marcellus abounds with prescriptions of this sort. Thus he tells us that the white stones found in the stomachs of young swallows assuage the most persistent headache, if they be held in the hand or tied to the head, always provided that their virtue be not impaired by contact with the ground.⁸ Another of his remedies for the same malady is a wreath of fleabane placed on the head, but it must not

¹ E. Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, ii. 7.

² F. Grabowsky, "Der Distrikt Dusson Timor in Südost-Borneo und seine Bewohner," *Das Ausland*, 1884, No. 24, p. 470.

³ *Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition made by Charles F. Hall*, edited by Prof. J. E. Nourse (Washington,

1879), p. 110 sq.

⁴ See above, vol. ii. p. 336.

⁵ W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines*, p. 156, § 265.

⁶ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 33 sq.

⁷ *Nat. Hist.* xxiv. 12 and 68, xxv. 171.

⁸ Marcellus, *De medicamentis*, i. 68.

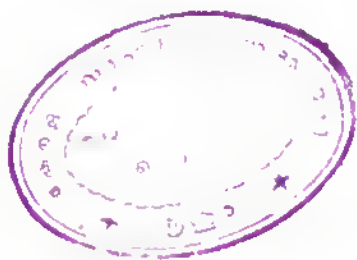
touch the earth.¹ On the same condition a decoction of the root of elecampane in wine kills worms; a fern, found growing on a tree, relieves the stomach-ache; and the pastern-bone of a hare is an infallible remedy for colic, provided, first, that it be found in the dung of a wolf, second, that it does not touch the ground, and third, that it is not touched by a woman.² Another cure for colic is effected by certain hocus-pocus with a scrap of wool from the forehead of a first-born lamb, if only the lamb, instead of being allowed to fall to the ground, has been caught by hand as it dropped from its dam.³ In the olden time, before a Lithuanian or Prussian farmer went forth to plough for the first time in spring, he called in a wizard to perform a certain ceremony for the good of the crops. The sage seized a mug of beer with his teeth, quaffed the liquor, and then tossed the mug over his head. This signified that the corn that year should grow taller than a man. But the mug might not fall to the ground; it had to be caught by somebody stationed at the wizard's back, for if it fell to the ground the consequence naturally would be that the corn also would be laid low on the earth.⁴

¹ Marcellus, *De medicamentis*, i. 76.

² *Ibid.* xxviii. 28 and 71, xxix. 35.

³ *Ibid.* xxix. 51.

⁴ Prætorius, *Deliciae Prussicae* (Berlin, 1871), p. 54.



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